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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

VOLUME 241

WASHINGTON, JULY 8, 2010

NUMBER 4,886

Austerity Nuts

AERICAN FAMILIES have done their level best to stay afloat—spending less and working more while trying to map out a financially sound future. They deserve that same degree of discipline and vigilance from their government.” That’s what House Minority Leader John Boehner had to say this past weekend, after President Obama proposed a new economic stimulus package. And precisely because the statement came from a Republican leader, it was difficult to take seriously. After all, Republicans have no compunction about running up deficits when they’re in charge by pushing tax cuts for the wealthy. It’s only when Democrats take over that the GOP suddenly discovers the virtues of fiscal responsibility.

But Republicans aren’t the only ones making the argument for focusing on deficits. More serious people are making a similar case, including Democrats in Congress who recently forced the administration to lower the proposed stimulus from \$200 billion to \$50 billion. The country should cut spending, say some observers, while the Fed should consider raising interest rates. The only real path to prosperity, in short, is austerity.

“Austerity” is a fairly abstract term, so it’s worth reminding ourselves just what austerity would entail right now. Obama’s modest proposal would give money to states, so that they could continue to cover the cost of unemployment benefits, Medicaid, housing assistance, and the like. With unemployment still hovering around 10 percent, the demand for these services is outstripping the ability of states to pay for them. That leaves the states with painful choices—like yanking state-funded health insurance away from 14,000 poor children, as Alabama is contemplating, or eliminating the financial assistance that allows 35,000 children in Colorado to attend all-day kindergarten.

Of course, state cutbacks inevitably involve layoffs, which have their own chilling effect on the economy. The austerity lobby insists this doesn’t matter, since balanced budgets will supposedly boost the private economy even as the public workforce contracts. As the argument goes, the real impediment to growth right now is the deficit, which spooks financial markets and crowds out private borrowing and investment. Defenders of this view cite the 1990s to validate their theory: As U.S. budget deficits came down and eventually turned into surpluses, the economy boomed.

But, as economists like Paul Krugman have argued, the analogy to the 1990s is hopelessly flawed. A major impediment to

growth back then was high interest rates; deficit reduction persuaded the Fed and the markets to lower interest rates, which encouraged growth. By contrast, interest rates today are at historic lows, which means borrowing money has never been cheaper. The main problem right now is a lack of consumer demand. Businesses aren’t investing and expanding because they don’t see rising sales on the horizon. That would seem to call for the more traditional Keynesian remedy of deficit spending.

Deficit spending may seem illogical given the prospect of rising debt for years to come, but, as Obama economic adviser Larry Summers, a key architect of the 1990s recovery, recently noted in a speech at Johns Hopkins University, boosting the economy can reduce deficits—and help restore fiscal balance over the long haul. Reducing spending, meanwhile, can eliminate jobs, slow growth, and reduce tax revenues. After Franklin Roosevelt, worried about deficits, cut spending in 1937, unemployment rose 4.7 percent and GNP fell 4.5 percent. “It is not possible to imagine sound budgets in the

absence of economic growth and solid economic performance,” Summers said. “Spurring growth, if we can achieve it, is by far the best way to improve our fiscal position.”

It’s advice that some of Summers’s counterparts abroad would do well to heed. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, for instance, has proposed \$144 billion in tax hikes and spending cuts. There certainly are countries like Greece that are teetering on the edge of default and will have to reduce their deficits; but, if the world’s economic powerhouses follow this advice, they will reduce consumer demand, which will mean reducing the demand for imports. Fiscal austerity,

then, would have the same effect as passing a tariff on foreign goods. Think Smoot-Hawley, in its twenty-first century incarnation. This is a recipe for a double-dip world recession.

Merkel defends her position by warning Germans that “we can’t have everything we want.” That’s true enough—especially in the United States, where enthusiasm for public services chronically outstrips willingness to pay for them. Deficit spending makes sense for the moment, not forever. Achieving a fiscally responsible future will require controlling health care expenses and, once the economy is on solid footing, raising some taxes. (Compared to other nations, the United States remains a relatively low-tax country.) The Obama administration has taken steps in these directions by passing health care reform and starting a fiscal commission that can consider both spending cuts and tax increases. Those seriously concerned about our economic future ought to focus on bolstering these long-term efforts, rather than fighting to balance budgets now—a course that will mean pain not only today but tomorrow as well. ♦



E.P. Yay

Only bureaucrats can solve global warming.

JONATHAN CHAIT

FIVE YEARS AGO, South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham joined a handful of senators traveling to the Yukon territory to view firsthand the effects of climate change. Witnessing melting ice caps and permafrost, and Inuit communities struggling to cope with a transforming environment, Graham was “moved.” “Climate change is different when you come here, because you see the faces of people experiencing it,” he said. In the following years, he asserted that “climate change is real” and promoted a cap-and-trade bill in the Senate.

Today, Graham is sprinting in the other direction. In April, he abandoned his climate bill when Democrats decided to focus on immigration reform first. He remained opposed even when they ultimately agreed to take it up. These days, he is refusing to acknowledge that carbon-dioxide emissions cause warmer temperatures. “I think they’ve been alarmist and the science is in question,” he says. Graham no longer sounds especially moved by the plight of the Inuit, who may be facing a threat to their way of life but are not facing the threat of a right-wing primary challenge.

The canary in the coal mine is a classic metaphor for the science of climate change. For the politics of climate change, Graham is the canary. Once the sole Senate Republican supporting cap-and-trade, he’s keeled over in his cage, his limp corpse a sign that Congress can’t handle this issue. There’s only one solution at hand: Let the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) impose regulations to stop climate change.

Three years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that the Clean Air Act compelled the EPA to regulate carbon-dioxide emissions. Hardly anybody thought the agency would actually do so. The threat of regulation was considered leverage to force Congress into passing legislation. But, while Congress would *like* to see carbon-dioxide emissions reduced, it also shows no sign of willingness to handle the job itself. So it is up to the EPA.

The widespread assumption that Congress would act arose from a consensus among economists that an elegant legislative solution would work better than blunt regulatory fiat. It’s certainly true

TRB *From Washington*

that a cap-and-trade system would reduce carbon more efficiently in theory. The Clean Air Act only provides for setting a single, across-the-board standard for emissions. Some industries would undergo great expense by dropping their emissions below the standard. Others could drop their emissions far below the standard at minimal cost, but they have no incentive to do so.

A cap-and-trade arrangement would bring market forces to bear on the problem. Congress would define the total permissible level of emissions. Companies that could cheaply reduce their emissions a great deal would sell allowances to those that could only do so at great expense. Thus, we would achieve the maximum reduction in carbon emissions at the minimum cost.

But you probably need to write a new law to set up cap-and-trade. And that’s proven messy. The House filled its cap-and-trade bill with sundry exemptions and special permits, significantly dampening its efficiency. The Senate, with its self-imposed 60-vote threshold, probably can’t pass any cap-and-trade bill at all. Whatever the inefficiencies imposed by the regulatory approach, they pale before the inefficiencies imposed by the legislative system.

In 1997, economist Alan Blinder made a provocative case for putting problems in the hands of unelected experts. Writing in *Foreign Policy*, Blinder recalled his experience at the Council of Economic Advisers, where, he wrote, “a policy’s merits can quickly get buried under a mountain of political detritus even before the policy emerges from the White House pressure cooker. Then it goes to Congress, where things only get worse.” Blinder left to work at the Federal Reserve, where decision-making, while imperfect, followed policymakers’ sense of the public good.

Blinder did not argue for dictatorship by wonk. (Wonktatorship?) Instead, he suggested that certain kinds of policies better lend themselves to government-

by-expert rather than government-by-Congress. Blinder did not mention carbon emissions, but his three criteria turn out to describe the issue to a tee.

First, it’s a technical issue requiring specialized knowledge. (Anybody unfortunate enough to witness the blustering assaults on climate science by meatheads like James Inhofe or Joe Barton can easily grasp the pitfalls of allowing Congress to adjudicate science.) Second, the issue requires long time horizons. Congress is not designed to minimize the risks of catastrophes that might take place decades hence. Nor is it prone to consider the interests of potential future industries, like renewable energy, alongside existing ones. And third, the issue requires imposing short-term pain in order to avert long-term costs, a trade-off most pols are loath to make.

The obvious objection to EPA regulation is that it’s undemocratic: Removing an issue from “politics” is a nice way of saying you’re removing it from accountability to the people. The objection has some truth, but less than meets the eye. While Congress never dreamed of limited carbon dioxide emissions when it passed the Clean Air Act four decades ago, the legislation did authorize the agency to set regulatory standards limiting air pollutants, “which in [the administrator’s] judgment cause, or contribute to, air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare.” The Supreme Court has correctly ruled that greenhouse gases qualify as such a pollutant.

And, while EPA regulation would distance the issue from democratic accountability, it would not remove it entirely. If the public objected strongly enough, it could vote for a Congress to overturn the EPA regulation.

In practice, we accept this kind of rule-by-expert routinely. Monetary policy, once the most political of issues—i.e., William Jennings Bryan denouncing the “cross of gold”—is now formulated with little regard for public opinion. Congress could overrule a decision by the Fed, but it never does. Likewise, few of us would like Congress to seize control of setting food and drug standards from the FDA.

If that doesn’t satisfy you, there’s the blunt reality that the current Senate may be the most liberal one we have for a long time, and it probably isn’t liberal enough to pass a climate-change law. On most issues, I’d wait until Congress can act. But are you willing to take a chance of sustaining irreversible climate damage for the sake of maximal democratic accountability? I’m not. ♦



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ADVERTISING SALES AND MARKETING

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THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 241, Number 11, Issue 4,886, July 8, 2010. (Printed in the United States on June 16, 2010.) Published bi-weekly (except for skipped publication dates of January 21, March 4, April 22, August 5, August 26, September 16, October 7, November 25, December 16 & 23, 2010) at 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. Yearly subscriptions, \$79.97; foreign, \$119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, \$99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, \$8.00 domestic and \$10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2010 by TNRI II, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 204-4871. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 15818, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5818. Member, BPA Worldwide. Send letters and unsolicited manuscripts to letters@tnr.com. Poetry submissions must be e-mailed to poetry@tnr.com.

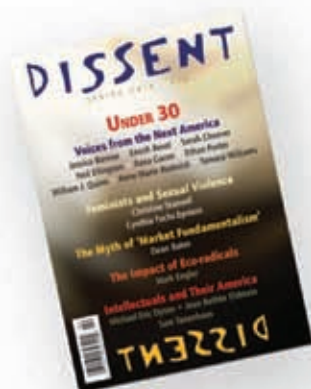
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The Mall

Ottomania

Turkey's imperial dreams.

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

LATE LAST MONTH, when news broke that Israeli commandos had killed nine Turkish nationals on board a Gaza-bound flotilla, no one here knew for sure exactly how Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan would respond. But Turks could be confident of one thing: Whatever Erdogan did, it was going to be dramatic. Tayyip, as Turks call him, is an emotive leader known for unleashing verbal tornadoes.

In January 2009, at Davos, he had famously exploded at Israeli President Shimon Peres, hissing, "You know how to kill very well!" before storming off the dais. Now, confronting one of the biggest foreign policy crises of his seven years as Turkish prime minister, Erdogan was expected by his constituents to raise hell on the international stage. And that was precisely what he did—denouncing Israel as "a lying machine," demanding that it "has to pay the bill for the blood that has been shed by the martyrs," and gratuitously instructing Israelis in Hebrew, "Thou shalt not kill." He then proceeded to cap this performance with a striking policy gesture: Last week, Turkey was one of just two Security Council members to vote against a new round of sanctions on Iran.

Erdogan's response may not have surprised Turks, but, to the West, it was a cold shock. Isn't Turkey one of America's quietest, most dependable allies? Isn't it the one Muslim country that *doesn't* hate Israel? Where, exactly, does this newfound national swagger come from?

The most obvious answer is Erdogan, a populist former mayor of Istanbul

who has made the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) into the dominant force in Turkish politics. Not surprisingly, Erdogan is beloved by many religious Turks and reviled by the country's secular elite, which views him as demagogic, crass, and embarrassing. ("Barbar!" a friend had exclaimed watching Erdogan at Davos, using the Turkish word for "barbarian." She said this with a wink, knowing full well that, for centuries, Turks had been called just that.) Erdogan has chipped away at the influence of the country's military, which had

"mainly negative" views.)

Yet, even as Erdogan has consolidated his political supremacy, he also faces two crucial upcoming tests. There are the 2011 elections, in which the AKP will face off against (among others) the Felicity Party, a more hard-line Islamist party aligned with the organization that sponsored the Gaza flotilla. Part of Erdogan's response to the flotilla deaths can be understood as an attempt to triangulate against this threat from the right. More immediately, Turks will vote in September on a proposal to reform the constitution.

The referendum is crucially important to the AKP, since it would allow the party to exercise more control over the judiciary. Erdogan needs to energize his base in advance of the vote. He seems to be betting that his post-flotilla theatrics will help.



Nobody should be surprised by Prime Minister Erdogan's recent rhetoric.

BUT IS ERDOGAN really the driving force behind Turkey's shift—or merely a vessel for the ideas of a man who, unlike the flashy prime minister, doesn't get a lot of press in the West? Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's foreign

minister, is the Kissinger to Erdogan's Nixon: an academic with a grand theory of how his country ought to conduct itself on the world stage. And this theory—which is probably best described as neo-Ottoman—is upending nearly a century of Turkish foreign policy thinking.

Slight and bookish, his mouse-like face frequently frozen in a sly, smug smile, the 51-year-old Davutoglu was born in the pious Anatolian city of Konya, attended a German high school in Istanbul and Bogazici University (a prestigious public college where classes are taught in English), then went on to become a professor

wielded enormous power over Turkish politics since the Ataturk era. While Turkey was known as a friend of Israel during recent decades, the relationship was arguably more of an alliance between two militaries than an alliance between two peoples. Lately, as Turkey has become more democratic and the military has retreated somewhat from politics, Erdogan has been able to bring Turkey's foreign policy into sync with the views of its population. (A BBC World Service poll found that, as of last December, only 6 percent of Turks held "mainly positive" views of Israel's influence, while 77 percent held

of international relations. While Turkish academics commonly seek extra training in Europe and America, Davutoglu spent years as an assistant professor at Malaysia's International Islamic University. At home, he found himself part of a rising class of religious intellectuals—young, aspirational scholars who had come from conservative Islamic backgrounds but were swimming in Western ideas. And so, Davutoglu's influences ranged from the *realpolitik* of Zbigniew Brzezinski to the Islamic political philosophy of the eleventh-century Seljuk vizier Nizam Ul Mulk.

After World War I, Turkey, its Middle Eastern empire destroyed, shifted away from the Arab world. It eventually latched on to the United States, which needed Turkey's borders as a buffer against the Soviet Union. Turkey became the first Muslim country to recognize Israel in 1949, entered NATO in 1952, and generally followed America's lead like a grateful lieutenant over the coming decades. But, as the cold war drew to a close, many Turkish intellectuals recognized that their country would need a new foreign policy; and Davutoglu was perhaps one of the first to articulate an overarching revision of the status quo. The doctrine—laid out in his nearly 600-page tome *Strategic Depth*, published in 2001—was called “zero problems with neighbors.” Turkey, he argued, needed to engage not only the West, but also the Middle East, Central Asia, Russia, and the Balkans.

At its inception, the AKP lacked a coherent foreign policy. Seeking to strike out independently from the army, it embraced Davutoglu's ideas and encouraged him to enter politics, first as an ambassador and then, in 2009, as foreign minister. These days, both Erdogan and the country's president, Abdullah Gul, do what he says on foreign affairs. They call Davutoglu “hocam,” which means “my teacher” or “my mentor.”

Admittedly, Davutoglu does not refer to his strategy as neo-Ottoman; that term has its roots in the diplomacy of a previous Turkish leader, Turgut Ozal, who, in the 1980s, also urged a re-engagement with the Arab world and beyond. And there is some debate among observers as to whether the foreign minister's ideas are truly imperialist. What is beyond doubt, however, is that Davutoglu wants Turkey to enjoy significant influence in the Middle East—Ankara recently eased visa requirements with many countries in the region and, just days ago, initiated a free-trade zone with Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan—and that his worldview, as put into practice by the boisterous Erdogan, car-

ries real appeal for many Turkish voters. The day after Erdogan's 2009 confrontation with Peres, I heard shopkeepers on my street chanting, “Kasimpasa, Kasimpasa!” which refers to the tough, blue-collar neighborhood in Istanbul where Erdogan grew up. Elites and members of the military may wince at Erdogan's style or wish for a return to a more pro-Western orientation. But the reality is that Turkey changed course a long time ago.

SUZY HANSEN

Suzy Hansen is a writer living in Istanbul.

Easy Rider

My revolutionary folding bike.

I BOUGHT a folding bicycle earlier this year in the hope that it would help me solve an embarrassing personal problem. I live in New York City, but, though I love the people I live among, I just don't like the place. I'm loath to move out, because I only recently moved in. I left a house and a yard in Westchester for an apartment in Morningside Heights, near Columbia University, where my husband works and where life seemed likely to be more lively. But then, I got here and realized that I hated the noise and the filth and the smell. Worse, I felt trapped, unable to move around except by means of slow or unreliable public transportation. I wanted to hop in my car and go wherever I wanted at the speed to which I had become accustomed, but my car lived at a garage seven blocks away, and it would be impossible to park once I got where I was going anyway.

My folding bicycle, made by a British company called Brompton, is odd-looking enough that people stop me on the street and ask about it. It's robin's-egg blue and looks like a swan that stretched out its neck and stuck it into a wheel. The

first time I tried out my Brompton, I refused to get off. I pretended to be oblivious to the looks I was getting from the pedestrians I was weaving around, illegally though adroitly (because the wheels are small), on one of the most crowded sidewalks in Manhattan (East 14th Street). I refused to think about the stepson I left at the store, who was imagining me lying under a truck. My bike has a steel frame and a good shock absorber and felt much sturdier than expected. I glided past East Village landmarks I hadn't seen in years, because they weren't close to any subway stops: Avenue D and 9th Street, where David Schearl lived in *Call It Sleep*; Tompkins Square Park, historic parade ground for anarchists and other radicals. For the first time in a long time, I glimpsed freedom. No longer would my way be blocked by gridlock, overly complicated subway connections, and inchworm-like buses. Now, I could scoot around everybody and everything and go where I wanted, when I wanted, faster than everything else on the road aside from other bicycles, and then, I could fold up my bicycle and hoist it onto whichever mode of public transportation I chose to further my escape.

I now know enough about the history of the bicycle to know that bypassing dead ends is what bicycles do. The very first bicycle-like vehicle, the velocipede, was invented in 1817, a year when there was a severe shortage of horses due to a volcanic eruption that spewed ash into the air and created weather that destroyed the oats that fed the horses. Bicycles invariably make a comeback during oil shortages and other energy crises, as happened during World War II and in the 1970s, and as some energy activists are hoping will happen now, in the wake of the oil spill and the moratorium on new drilling in the Gulf. But bicycles help people circumnavigate social barriers, too. In the mid-1890s, bicycle manu-

BROMPTON

“For the first time in a long time, I glimpsed freedom.”



facturers improved on the “high wheeler,” which had one huge front wheel, and came up with the “safety bicycle,” which looked much as bicycles do today. This turned bicycles into an affordable form of mass transit, at which point it became acceptable for women to travel farther, unchaperoned, than ever before. They also began to wear bloomers, the first version of women’s pants.

The folding bicycle has been around as long as the safety bicycle, but only recently has it been marketed to the general consumer, along with an array of other bikes that challenge the supremacy of the purely recreational bike: cargo bicycles and tricycles, which haul stuff; recumbent and semi-recumbent bikes, which go faster and farther with less effort than upright bikes; even electric bikes, which supplement leg power with motor power and can be especially useful in hill country. To my mind, though, the folding bicycle is the most revolutionary of them all. Here’s what it does that no other kind of bike does: It obviates the waiting game. Right now, in New York City and other cities around the country, urban planners and transportation officials are trying to undo the damage done by twentieth-century visionary planners, such as Robert Moses, who bet, incorrectly, on automobiles. Cars turn out to be a terrible technology for cities, too big and dirty for crowded, narrow streets and unnecessarily powerful for the short trips that city dwellers make. And, though it’s hard to get people to abandon their cars for bicycles in an environment that cars make unsafe, studies have shown that, when cities signal their willingness to accommodate bicycles, people become more willing to risk riding them, and that, when more people ride, fewer of them get into accidents, because motorists are forced to pay closer attention to the cyclists in their midst.



This is why, if you pedal around a U.S. city, you will encounter more bicycle lanes than you used to, both the kind painted right onto the street and the kind protected by median strips. You will discover new bicycle parking spots; bicycle-oriented signage and traffic lights; even bike-sharing programs, in which you borrow a bicycle from one of several bike stands around the city and return it to any of those stands. (Washington, D.C., just announced an expansion of its bike-sharing program, from 120 to 1,100 bikes; Boston, Denver, and Minneapolis have such programs in the works.) What you’re less likely to find are buses and trains that let you board with your bicycle, especially during rush hour, since most of them were designed before it occurred to anyone that the real secret to urban mobility isn’t the ferrying of people but the ferrying of people plus their human-powered vehicles.

But now, if your city can’t make itself bike-friendly fast enough to suit you, with a few turns of a screw and a kick to knock your wheels in place, you can make your bike city-friendly instead. (It still takes me close to a minute to collapse my Brompton, but my stepson, who has owned his for more than a year, can do it in under 20 seconds.) You can forego parking, because you can take your bike with you; you can stop worrying about theft, for the same reason; and you can get your bicycle home by subway or taxi or commuter train if you need to.

My Brompton has made New York City feel both bigger and smaller than it used to. It feels smaller because I move faster. I spend up to 30 minutes taking my children 24 blocks to school on a public bus, then ride home along the Hudson River in under 10 minutes. I can get to Greenwich Village for lunch with my downtown friends in much less than the 40 minutes I previously allotted for the trip by subway—and I can shove my bicycle under the table in the restaurant before the waiter quite realizes what I’m doing.

But the city feels bigger because I see much more of it, and I see that it really is changing. There’s a glorious new skate park along the Hudson River, right next to the extraordinary new bike path; there are bike lanes downtown nearly everywhere you look; and there are cyclists to fill them. (The bicycle activists at Transportation Alternatives say that there are roughly 200,000 cyclists in New York City every day. New York City does not conduct a rigorous survey, as other cities



do.) My fellow riders aren’t just the grim speed freaks in Lycra who race past me on their Trek bicycles, muttering about people who clog the lane. They’re people like me in civilian clothes, commuting to work, carting purchases home, marshaling broods of children on scooters, tricycles, and princess bicycles. We’re a tiny army of unwitting urban reformers, making the city safe for cyclists by making cycling a part of our everyday lives, rather than a sport we have to set aside time for.

Which reminds me: I’ve also stopped going to the gym, which has always struck me as a Dickensian place, a factory of the urban body, all wheels and gears and the urgent expenditure of energy on nothing. This policy may backfire; as a writer who works at home, I don’t have enough of a commute to gin up much exercise when I make my daily rounds. But I can always veer off to Fort Tryon Park, which has one of the most beautiful gardens and the single best view of the Hudson in the tri-state area; or loop around Central Park; or bundle my bike onto the subway and get off at South Ferry and take the greenway back uptown. I couldn’t do that in the suburbs. Now that I’m finding ways to get around, I’m starting to think that there may be a point to New York City after all.

JUDITH SHULEVITZ

Judith Shulevitz is the author of THE SABBATH WORLD: GLIMPSES OF A DIFFERENT ORDER OF TIME.

Homeward Bound

Notes on Helen Thomas.

THE LADY has been an old crone for more than half a century. So it was inevitable that some people in the profession would feel sympathy for Helen Thomas, even in her wicked quintessence. And not only merciful to her person but concerned for her lost job. Yes, Hearst pushed her, but Thomas, intuitively sensing that she would no longer be deferred to by the president or the press corps, went gently. Her wacky game was up.

But this is not comedy. And Thomas’s answer to a random question—from a rabbi, it is true—about her current thoughts on Israel were deadly serious. She suggested that the whole matter could be wrapped up if only the Jews of Israel would go home to where they came from, which in her narrative, she made clear, meant primarily Poland and

Germany. And maybe the United States.

Now, the truth is that almost everyone was repelled by Thomas's comments. The president said they were "offensive" and "out of line." But he added that all this, meaning her resignation/dismissal, was "a shame, because Helen was ... really an institution of Washington." Actually, I believe it is not a shame and that it is precisely because she had become, *mirabile dictu*, a Washington institution that her humiliation is deserved and just.

The president's press spokesman, Robert Gibbs, also commented that her words were "offensive," a descriptive term. But Gibbs added "reprehensible," making his observations a bit more chilling and judgmental than Obama's. The White House Correspondents' Association called her wicked ramble "indefensible." Her speakers agency cancelled her contract. And Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland, called off her scheduled commencement address. (Why it invited her in the first place is a mystery since her nuttiness was no surprise to anyone, at least to any sentient adult and especially in the Washington area.)

The end of this career is not because of "the Israel lobby" or "the Jewish vote." It is a consequence of the American people's own sense of justice and their historic sense of justice for the Jews. This goes back to way before the Declaration of Independence, when Old Testament Protestantism was cutting through the brush to its own errand in the wilderness. The American nation, from the seventeenth century to this one, has seen in the homelessness of the Jewish nation an injustice that could only be cured by what the religious called the "restoration." Hardly a Congress in history has failed to call for it, and, in the twentieth century, only two secretaries of state, John Foster Dulles and James Baker, and their presidents tried to betray it.

The public-opinion polls continue to confirm this loyalty of the American people to Israel. And there is something steadfast, almost heroic in that fealty. One reason that it sometimes seems brave is that it has to confront at once fashionable and unflinching antagonism to Israel, much of it actually raw hatred. The present season of disdain started with Walt and Mearsheimer. A second cause comes from two cognate sources: the declining "mainline" churches (Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist, etc., many of which, by the way, issued hysterical and grotesquely false condemnations of the Mediterranean confrontation) and the "non-political"



The end of Helen Thomas's career is not because of "the Israel lobby."

NGOs like Human Rights Watch (about which Benjamin Birnbaum has published a scrupulous and withering piece in *THE NEW REPUBLIC*). The blogosphere is the third place of origin for irresponsible information and opinion.

Right now and maybe for a few months more, these views are being bolstered by the pogrom of international rhetoric about the *Mavi Marmara*, the jihadist ship dressed up as a Mississippi River cruise boat. Of course, the onslaught of hostility to Zion comes daily from the United Nations; its recognizably degraded agencies; gangster governments like Iran with its allies Turkey and Syria; and, alas, over the last year, in the highest echelons—the very highest echelons—of the Obama administration.

Fouad Ajami, the great scholar of the Middle East and a frequent *TNR* contributor, has an essay titled "IRAN AND THE 'FREEDOM RECESSION'" in *The Wall Street Journal*. It is, as you can see from its title, not about Israel or imagined

Palestine but about Persia and its present struggle for freedom and decency. He writes, "There is no guarantee that categorical American support would have altered the outcome of the struggle between autocracy and liberty in Iran. But it shall now be part of the narrative of liberty that when Persia rose in the summer of 2009, the steward of American power ducked for cover, and that a president who prided himself on his eloquence couldn't even find the words to tell the forces of liberty that he understood the wellsprings of their revolt."

President Obama's failure to find the right words is not a failure of eloquence. It is a failure of truth and a deliberate aversion to the truths of history. Obama's disregard for Zionist achievements in building a real society in Palestine and preparing for statehood from the *fin de siècle* until the eve of the Jewish catastrophe cannot be a result of ignorance, although it may well be a willed ignorance. The fact is that the president

has his own narrative, and it is essential to his view of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and of how to settle it. The one major problem with his perspective is that it is largely untrue or, to be more precise, it is maybe 20 percent true. For one, it is untrue in that he omits the essential Zionism of the Jewish religion. But faith is only faith, and prayer kept the vision alive. What it did not do is build a real polity in the Holy Land and in the Diaspora and, from that, a state. Zionism did that.

Zionism was part of the “springtime of nations” that burst out in the middle of the nineteenth century ... as an aftereffect. Liberal nationalism in Europe did not quite admit the Jews to its rights or did so only on the conditions of utter assimilation and cultural self-denial. Indeed, progressives almost everywhere picked up anti-Semitic tropes and made them their own. Here begins the history of modern Jewish nationalism.

I will not recite this history just because President Obama fails to acknowledge it. But the history of Israel cannot be understood without grasping its Zionist essence: the holiness of the land, the religion of work, the law as foundation of justice, the discipline of science, the connection of every Jew to another, the centrality of Jerusalem as the physical and spiritual pivot of “the return.” You may think it corny. Still, the prayer: “next year in Jerusalem.” And the reality: already this year.

WHY AM I discussing the ugly ruminations of Helen Thomas in tandem with the president’s views of and policies toward Israel? Not because they are kindred. Obama is not a stupid or a malicious man. But I also happen to think that, almost across the board, he is not wise in his conduct of foreign policy. His incompetence in the Middle East and especially with reference to Israel-Palestine derives from his utter coolness to the Jewish nation and his intellectually distorting emotions about the Arab and Muslim orbits.

With his arrival in Turkey on his first overseas trip during his presidency, Obama came down on the side of the “world of Islam,” with which liberal Muslims have been struggling for decades. It is a struggle for the nation-state, with incipient liberalizing aspirations, against the doctrine of the Islamists, which was best expressed by Sayyid Qutb, “A Muslim has no nationality except his belief.” In his visits to Ankara and Istanbul, he was more concerned with courting the Turks as part of Islam than the Turks as

a nation. This certainly pleased Prime Minister Erdogan, who has since shown just how much further he wants to go in that direction.

Islam was even more the core of Obama’s visit to Egypt than it was in Turkey. It was not just his historic distortions of Muslims and Islam and their institutions. Or, for that matter, his exaggerations about how many Americans are Muslims. And his tacky misrepresentations of the relations between Muslim countries and the United States throughout history. He also chooses to pick between factions in an intra-Islamic religious debate. He even took a swipe at our French allies, who are weighing whether a woman should be able to wear hijab, jilbab, niqab, khimar in the street. I find the proposal a bit silly. But I am not French. OK, the American president thinks the choice of clothes a civil liberty. The truly endangered and coerced women, however, are those in Muslim countries—in the Muslim world, as Obama would have it. But he has not spoken up for them.

So back to Helen Thomas. She hates Jews. The president does not. But, as he couldn’t find a suitable voice for Iran, he cannot find a suitable and truthful voice for Israel. And, if President Obama thinks, as he seems to, that there was no century of Zionist democratic state-building or 20 years of crimped and “temporary” frontiers until, in 1967, three neighboring states, with tangible support from across the Arab world, sought to dissolve even these, why should he not give his heart to the Palestinians and his back or back of his hand to the Israelis?

Thomas believes that Israel only exists because of its refugees from Germany and Poland. The president is not so coarse. And he must know that nearly one million Jews escaped from horrific Arab and Islamic realms immediately at the dawn of independence, and a considerable number did so before that.

In fact, insofar as Obama reads his history, as he seems to do, as a transaction between the Holocaust and what the Arabs call the *nakba*, the disaster, it is distorted history. It is not only that the traumas of two people are not at all similar or compassable in weight and depth. It is ridiculous to have to argue this elementary point. For almost 100 years, the Arabs of Palestine and the Arabs beyond thought they could simply dismiss Zionism and the vital liberal society it built. They can’t. And the president shouldn’t either.

MARTIN PERETZ

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THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 241, Number 11, Issue 4,886, July 8, 2010. (Printed in the United States on June 16, 2010.) Published bi-weekly (except for skipped publication dates of March 4, April 22, August 5, August 26, September 16, October 7, November 25, and December 16 & 23, 2010) at 1331 H Street, N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. Yearly subscriptions, \$79.97; foreign, \$119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, \$99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, \$8.00 domestic and \$10.00 foreign (Canada includes postage & handling). © 2010 by TNR II, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 204-4871. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 15818, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5818. Member, BPA Worldwide. Send letters and unsolicited manuscripts to letters@tnr.com. Poetry submissions must be e-mailed to poetry@tnr.com. For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.tnr.com/subscriber-services.

It's Alive

Can Elena Kagan save the legal left?

JUSTIN DRIVER

IN 1997, JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA released a slender volume setting forth his judicial vision. In addition to defending originalism, Scalia sought to disparage what he viewed as the then-dominant mode of interpreting the Constitution. “The ascendant school of constitutional interpretation affirms the existence of what is called The Living Constitution, a body of law that . . . grows and changes from age to age, in order to meet the needs of a changing society,” Scalia wrote. “And it is the judges who determine those needs and ‘find’ that changing law.” Scalia proceeded to express disgust at the widespread acceptance of living constitutionalism among not only the legal elite, but also ordinary citizens: “The American people have been converted to belief in The Living Constitution, a ‘morphing’ document that means, from age to age, what it ought to mean.”

Today, a mere 13 years later, it would appear that many Americans have changed their minds—and in a way that surely cheers Scalia. Since 2003, Quinnipiac University has conducted a poll asking respondents which theory of constitutional interpretation “comes closer to your point of view”: Should the Supreme Court “only consider the original intentions of the authors of the Constitution,” or should it “consider changing times and current realities in applying the principles of the Constitution?” Although the question’s phrasing contains considerable infelicity, recent responses nevertheless suggest that Americans increasingly embrace originalism over living constitutionalism. In July 2008, 52 percent of respondents favored living constitutionalism and only 40 percent favored originalism. When the poll was conducted in April of this year, however, originalists outnumbered living constitutionalists, 49 percent to 42 percent.

Originalism’s influence is also plainly on the rise where it matters most immediately—at the Supreme Court. Two years ago, in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, among the Court’s most significant decisions of the last decade, the justices divided 5–4 in determining that the Second Amendment protects an individual’s right to possess firearms in some circumstances. The justices were united, however, in disputing the Second Amendment’s meaning on what was at least purported to be primarily originalist terrain—a circumscribed jurisprudential exchange that would have been difficult to imagine until recently.

Perhaps the most vivid illustration of living constitutionalism’s decline unfolded last summer during Sonia Sotomayor’s confirmation hearings. A common view of the Sotomayor hearings is that they were only the latest in a lengthy series of tediously non-substantive examinations of recent Court nominees. According to this telling, Sotomayor’s testimony fit comfortably within Elena Kagan’s suddenly famous law review lamentation regarding the sorry state of the confirmation process. The hearings that followed Robert Bork’s defeat, Kagan wrote in 1995, “have presented to the public a vapid and hollow charade, in which repetition of platitudes has replaced discussion of viewpoints and personal anecdotes have supplanted legal analysis.”

Sotomayor’s testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee certainly shortchanged neither the platitudinous nor the anecdotal. But, whereas Kagan bemoaned the absence of substantive engagement that she witnessed ringside during the testimony of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the principal problem with Sotomayor’s hearings was not that they lacked substance. The real issue was that much of the substance they did contain inflicted affirmative damage to liberals’ constitutional conception. Indeed, in the wake of Sotomayor’s acquiescent performance, liberals should applaud a return to the Ginsburg era. For all of the criticism about her supposed evasiveness, Ginsburg’s hearings left no doubt that she understood the Constitution as an evolving document. Not only did Ginsburg explain how the original understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause could not adequately account for the Court’s decisions promoting gender equality beginning in the 1970s, she also twice invoked Benjamin Cardozo’s notion that the Framers intended the Constitution to govern “not for the passing hour, but for the expanding future.”

Following Sotomayor’s nomination, she touted Cardozo as her favorite justice, but his imprint upon her ensuing testimony was indiscernible. When Senator Lindsey Graham asked Sotomayor whether she believed in a living Constitution, she distanced herself from the concept. “The Constitution is a document that is immutable [in] the sense that it’s lasted two hundred years. The Constitution has not changed except by amendment,” Sotomayor explained. “It is a process, an amendment process that is set forth in the document. It doesn’t live other than to be timeless by the expression of what it says. What changes is society. What changes is what facts a judge may get presented.”

In Sotomayor’s defense, the nation is today a good deal more constitutionally conservative than it was when Ginsburg testified. An undeniable part of the reason for this trend, however, is that members of the legal left have demonstrated insufficient intellectual courage in defending living constitutionalism—and insufficient deftness in attacking originalism. Just as figures in the political world have almost completely rejected the word “liberal,” the legal world has largely abandoned the “living Constitution.” Even left-leaning legal academics, who were not long ago the leading advocates of living constitutionalism, have overwhelmingly forsaken the term and instead have proposed a steady series of would-be successors. (Laurence H. Tribe’s *The Invisible Constitution* may be the most widely known contribution to the growing genre.)

The stakes, in other words, at Kagan’s upcoming confirmation hearings could hardly be higher. Viewed optimistically, liberals can hope that Kagan seizes the occasion to reassert the legitimacy of living constitutionalism. At a minimum, though, the hearings offer a valuable opportunity to halt the alarming slide toward originalism. If, instead, what one prominent conservative gleefully called “the Sotomayor test” becomes established as the new standard for Court nominees, the hearings will represent yet another failure for the liberal judicial vision.

CONTRARY TO popular understanding, neither Earl Warren nor William Brennan dreamt up the notion of living constitutionalism. Over the years, Scalia has repeatedly emphasized that the metaphor of a living Constitution sniffs of a suspiciously recent vintage. “A change occurred in the last half of the twentieth century, and I’m sorry to say that my Court was responsible for it,” Scalia explained in 2008 in a typically lapsarian narrative. “It was my Court that invented the notion of a living Constitution.” Similarly, Scalia has stated that the “living Constitution stuff has been going on since the Warren Court.”

In fact, the metaphor has a lineage that stretches back long before the Warren Court. In 1914, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. wrote an opinion describing constitutional provisions as “organic, living institutions,” and, in 1920, he wrote another opinion stating that the Founding generation “called into life a being the development of which could not have been foreseen completely by the most gifted of its begetters.” In 1927, moreover, Howard Lee McBain, a Columbia University professor, wrote a book called *The Living Constitution*. “However unchanging the form, it is the peculiar virtue of our bills of rights that their substance has changed and is changing,” McBain explained.

Although legal liberals have almost universally eschewed the beleaguered label in recent years, not everyone is prepared to discard it. Last month, University of Chicago law professor David A. Strauss published a book he titled—defiantly—*The Living Constitution*, which offers a powerful defense of both the idea and the metaphor. Strauss begins by dis-

only sometimes the right approach, then you have to answer at least two other questions,” Strauss explains. “What principle determines when it is right to abandon originalism? And, once you decide not to be an originalist in a certain category of cases, what do you do instead?”

Strauss answers his rhetorical question by insisting that originalists, in the breach, adhere to a version of the living Constitution, which he defines as a document “that evolves, changes over time, and adapts to new circumstances, without being formally amended.” And originalists often find themselves in the breach because the Constitution’s most significant provisions frequently provide little textual guidance. How much process, exactly, is due under the due process clause? Strauss suggests that originalists, by transforming generalities into specifics, disrespect the very Framers they purport to valorize.

Elena Kagan is as capable as anyone of persuasively articulating these ideas in a public forum. Kagan has great familiarity with two of the leading examples that Strauss draws upon to illuminate how the living Constitution works: freedom of speech and the equal protection clause. Kagan knows intimately the role that doctrinal development has played in shaping the modern First Amendment, as she began her academic career by writing in the area. And Kagan’s clerkship for Thurgood Marshall would enable her to extol his legacy as a lawyer who helped to usher in a racially egalitarian conception of the Fourteenth Amendment. (I should disclose here that at least part of my faith in Kagan stems from my professional and personal relationship with her—which

of liberty is a living one. Roberts offered a one-sentence response: “I’d agree that the tradition of liberty is a living thing, yes.” Although Alito evaded the question of whether the Constitution embodies evolving values, he nevertheless allowed, “I think the Constitution is a living thing in the sense that matters.” Scalia, by way of contrast, charted a distinct path at his confirmation hearings: “I think it is fair to say you would not regard me as someone who would be likely to use the phrase ‘living Constitution.’”

Some portions of the Roberts and Alito hearings even resonate with passages from Strauss’s book. “When [the Framers] adopt broad terms and broad principles, we should hold them to their word. . . . And that means when they have adopted principles like liberty, that doesn’t get a crabbed or narrow construction,” Roberts said. Here is Alito: “The genius of [the Constitution] is that it is not terribly specific on certain things. It sets out some things [that] are very specific, but it sets out some general principles, and then leaves it for each generation to apply those to the particular factual situations that come up.” And here is Strauss: “The genius of the U.S. Constitution is precisely that it is specific where specificity is valuable and general where generality is valuable.”

Having established that even conservatives like Roberts and Alito do not completely disavow living constitutionalism, Kagan could—instead of flatly pledging allegiance to canonical cases like *Brown v. Board of Education* and pledging contempt for anti-canonical cases like *Dred Scott*—proceed to explain, in some detail, how these familiar cases fit into the originalist and living constitutionalist paradigms. Regarding *Brown*, Kagan should note that there is little reason to believe that the ratifiers of the Fourteenth Amendment would have understood the equal protection clause to invalidate racially segregated public schools. The most celebrated decision in the Court’s history contemplated, and rejected, an exclusively originalist constitutional interpretation. “[W]e cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when *Plessy v. Ferguson* was written,” the Court stated in *Brown*. “We must consider public education in the light of its full development and its present place in American life throughout the Nation.”

Although the Court decided *Brown* unanimously, we do have some contemporaneous evidence of how an originalist might have approached the case. The Dixiecrats’ Southern Manifesto analyzed

The upcoming hearings will give Kagan the chance to reassert the legitimacy of the living Constitution.

tilling the case against originalism to its bare essence and then explains how the question becomes not *whether* the Constitution lives, but *how* the Constitution lives. Scalia has said of his occasional willingness to follow judicial precedent that conflicts with unadulterated originalism, “I’m an originalist—I’m not a nut.” “That way of putting it is disarming,” Strauss writes, “but it seems fair to respond: if following a theory consistently would make you a nut, isn’t that a problem with the theory?” Strauss also skewers Scalia’s familiar declaration that he practices a “fainthearted” originalism. “[I]f you’re going to say that originalism is

dates to when she taught at Harvard Law School and I was her student there.)

At her hearings, Kagan might initiate discussion of the subject by saying, “I generally agree with the statements then-Judge Roberts and then-Judge Alito expressed when they were sitting at this table.” That’s because—while Sotomayor fled from living constitutionalism—the last two Republican nominees to the Court did not. Senator Arlen Specter asked both John Roberts and Samuel Alito whether they agreed with the idea, expressed by Justice John Marshall Harlan’s dissent in *Poe v. Ullman* (1961), that the constitutional concept

Brown this way: “The original Constitution does not mention education. Neither does the Fourteenth Amendment nor any other amendment. The debates preceding the submission of the Fourteenth Amendment clearly show that there was no intent that it should affect the systems of education maintained by the states.” However mightily modern originalists may struggle to have their theory accommodate *Brown*, moreover, no amount of struggle can square originalism with *Bolling v. Sharpe*, a companion case to *Brown* that invalidated segregation in District of Columbia public schools. Because the Fourteenth Amendment does not apply to the federal government, the Court relied upon the Fifth Amendment’s due process clause to strike down Jim Crow in Washington. Setting aside the considerable textual leaps that are required, an originalist account of *Bolling* would still need to explain precisely how the Bill of Rights ratifiers opposed racially segregated schooling in 1791—just after they ratified the slavery-legitimizing Constitution. None of the foregoing would take Kagan into particularly dangerous waters, as she would be merely highlighting some of the originalist deficiencies that helped to undo Bork in 1987.

Apart from offering meaningful exegeses of decisions that are habitually discussed in confirmation hearings, though, it would be better still if Kagan would affirm other, broadly celebrated opinions as constitutional bedrock. In doing so, she should further articulate how originalism cannot plausibly account for many of our nation’s most treasured decisions. *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* (1966), for instance, features a particularly intense confrontation between originalism and living constitutionalism. In *Harper*, the Court considered whether states could continue administering the poll tax in state elections. In invalidating the measure, Justice William Douglas’s opinion for the Court made a strong case for the validity of a living Constitution. “[T]he Equal Protection Clause is not shackled to the political theory of a particular era,” Douglas wrote. “In determining what lines are unconstitutionally discriminatory, we have never been confined to historic notions of equality. . . . Notions of what constitutes equal treatment for purposes of the Equal Protection Clause do change.”

As with *Brown*, the originalist take on *Harper*, provided by Justice Hugo Black’s dissent, now seems unacceptably wooden: “The Court’s justification for consulting its own notions rather than following

the original meaning of the Constitution, as I would, apparently is based on the belief of the majority of the Court that for this Court to be bound by the original meaning of the Constitution is an intolerable and debilitating evil.” By singing *Harper*’s praises, while making clear that she does not necessarily subscribe to the notion that wealth is a suspect classification, Kagan would admittedly invite a senator to assert that the Constitution—properly understood—permits states to prevent poor people from voting. But, if

the difference *between making law and interpreting law*. Alas, the left currently lacks a pithy critique of originalism.

Democrats might begin to mount such a critique by drawing inspiration from history. As Jeff Shesol demonstrates in *Supreme Power*, his compelling account of the 1930s Court-packing plan, Franklin Roosevelt leveled withering assessments of judicial interpretation excessively bound by history. When the Court initially interpreted the commerce clause in a historically contin-

Liberals should describe originalism as “the horse-and-buggy Constitution” or “Rip Van Winkle’s Constitution.”

the firestorm that recently engulfed Rand Paul offers any indication of the public’s appetite for the fine parsing of widely revered constitutional understandings, it seems doubtful that even one senator would accept that invitation.

Kagan’s embrace of living constitutionalism might have the happy byproduct of generating a frank acknowledgement that the act of judging—at least on occasion—calls for the exercise of judgment. Contrary to Roberts’s judge-as-umpire analogy and Sotomayor’s decidedly unphilosophical contention that her “judicial philosophy” could be summed up simply as “fidelity to the law,” many esteemed legal authorities (including judges) have long recognized that judicial decisions sometimes do not yield plainly right and plainly wrong answers. Justice David Souter’s Harvard commencement address this month wisely revived that notion. Reasonable judicial minds can reach different legal conclusions, especially in cases that reach the Supreme Court. When the justices divide 5-4, it seems implausible that one of the two sides invariably either is composed of bad judges or is operating in bad faith.

QUITE APART FROM validating living constitutionalism, the left also should dedicate greater energy to vanquishing originalism. The political right has consistently outmaneuvered the political left in attacking the opposition’s preferred method of constitutional interpretation. Understanding that the best defense is often a good offense, the right has honed accessible shorthand for caricaturing the legal approach of liberals. George W. Bush’s mantra during much of his presidency praised judges *who would not legislate from the bench*, judges who understood

gent fashion in finding that early New Deal legislation exceeded congressional power, Roosevelt famously complained, “The country was in the horse-and-buggy age when that clause was written.” In 1926, well before that episode, Roosevelt mocked conservatives’ penchant for nostalgia. “My old neighbor on the Hudson River, Rip Van Winkle, went soundly asleep, and seemed annoyed, on waking up many years later, to find that the world was very different,” FDR explained. “Rip has many successors today. . . . They have not been physically asleep, but they have come to view the world with eyes of the past.” Roosevelt thus provides at least two options that a Democrat might try out on the stump: labeling originalism “the horse-and-buggy Constitution,” or, alternately, designating it “Rip Van Winkle’s Constitution.”

Perhaps the most effective way to pan originalism in today’s political climate, though, is the most obvious. “At first blush it seems certain that a *living* Constitution is better than what must be its counterpart, a *dead* Constitution,” Justice William Rehnquist wrote in a 1976 article (which proceeds to attack living constitutionalism as undemocratic). “It would seem that only a necrophile could disagree. If we could get one of the major public opinion research firms in the country to sample public opinion concerning whether the United States Constitution should be *living* or *dead*, the overwhelming majority of the responses doubtless would favor a *living* Constitution.” Assuming Rehnquist’s prediction holds 34 years later, the living Constitution, so widely understood to lack a pulse, might well experience a resurrection.

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Traitors to Their Class

The new liberal super-rich.

DAVID CALLAHAN

FOR BARACK OBAMA'S inauguration, Washington Dulles International Airport had to close a runway to accommodate private jet traffic. According to aviation authorities, the D.C. area had never before experienced so large an influx of corporate jets—around 500 in total, or almost double the number for George W. Bush's second inauguration. And this was to celebrate the presidency of someone who had run on a platform that included tax hikes for the rich and a crackdown on Wall Street.

In the victory over John McCain, Obama had turned out the traditional Democratic base, but he was helped along by a less likely set of supporters, a group that *Forbes* dubbed "Obama's billionaires." The group included big names like George Soros, Warren Buffett, and David Geffen, but it went way beyond them. When it was all over, Obama had raised more money than McCain in eight out of ten of the wealthiest zip codes and won seven out of the ten wealthiest counties. He captured voters making over \$200,000 by six percentage points.

Was this a once-in-a-lifetime fluke, or will these well-heeled backers still be around in 2012? That might seem unlikely after the fights over health care and financial reform. Campaign records show a shift in industry donations toward the Republican Party, and things could get uglier as Obama pushes his promised tax hikes on high earners, which are in the budget plan now before Congress.

But Obama's billionaires may just stick around. These are not your textbook plutocrats who are dead set against government and taxes. They worry about poor people and pollution. They want government to make sure that Americans have the kind of education they need to compete in the global economy. They don't seek to drastically upend an unequal economic order in which they have thrived, but they do want to sand down its harshest edges. They are post-New Deal liberals—cautious, technocratic, and non-populist—like Barack Obama himself and many of the people who work for him.

And, if they do stick around, they could change U.S. politics. For better or for worse, Obama's wealthy backers are the vanguard of a trend that is transforming business and the politics of business. While still a minority of the upper class, their numbers and wealth are growing. They have backed Democrats before, but Obama's election may be the first clear indication of the influence they are going to have on American public life.

RICH LIBERALS ARE, of course, nothing new. The term "limousine liberal," coined in 1969, long described wealthy donors from Malibu or New York's Upper West Side who bankrolled liberal social and foreign policy causes. But the new post-New Deal liberalism of affluent America is far more extensive. It is rooted in the shift from a manufacturing to a knowledge economy. This shift has vastly enriched what Richard Florida calls the "creative class"—highly educated professionals and entrepreneurs who deal with information, technology, and ideas. Many of these people have progressive preferences—and not just on endangered species and gay marriage.

Why is that? For starters, the more educated you are, the more likely you are to question rigid hierarchy, be tolerant of cultural differences, and reject traditional values. These correlations aren't found only in the United States; they are also evident globally, as the political scientist Ronald Inglehart has shown through the World Values Survey. Although education can obviously open one's mind to new ideas, Inglehart suggests a deeper underlying dynamic, which is that the educated are more likely to have been raised in economically secure families. People who grow up feeling secure tend to focus more on self-expression and worry less about maintaining order. They are "post-materialist." The insecure, by contrast, are prone to see the world as a precarious place that requires strong authority and traditional values.

This explains why upper-middle-class college kids were on the forefront of the social and political movements of the 1960s, but it doesn't account for today's rich liberals. Back then, a high-brow degree in math or computer science didn't have that much to do with getting rich. The main path into the wealthy upper class, beyond inheritance, was through large corporations and banks that prized conformity over creativity. That equation changed with the explosion of the knowledge economy over the last four decades. Suddenly, being able to "think different," as Apple famously advised, could lead to big-time wealth.

Today, brainiac entrepreneurs who strike out on their own to "monetize ideas" are heavily represented among the liberal new rich—like Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, who are each worth \$17.5 billion and lean left, as does Google CEO Eric Schmidt, who stumped for Obama in 2008. Apple founder Steve Jobs has almost exclusively given money to Democrats. And, since 1999, eBay co-founder and computer scientist Pierre Omidyar has handed over \$150,000 to Democrats and only \$4,000 to Republicans.

Plenty of other educated people have started to pull huge incomes as advanced cognitive skills—from writing software to deciphering legal briefs to creating stock-trading algorithms—have become much more valuable. And it turns out that many of them are liberals. Computer scientist and former academic David Shaw, who created the wildly successful hedge fund D.E. Shaw & Co. is a huge contributor to Democrats, as are many of his extravagantly paid employees. The firm boasts that "over 100 of our employees hold Ph.D.s . . . and approximately 20 percent are published authors whose work ranges from highly technical papers in specialized academic journals to award-winning mystery novels." In the 2008 election cycle, 89 percent of the firm's political contributions went to Democrats.

There is also a symbiotic relationship between the metro areas where the knowledge economy has exploded and the politics of the people who live there. Information-age firms have taken root in places where the most-educated people live. Many of today's new fortunes are being made in the Bay Area, Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, Boston, and suburban Washington. Some of these places were already liberal; the new money has helped move others sharply to the left. None of the ten

richest U.S. counties are in states won by John McCain.

Nowhere has wealth piled up faster than on the West Coast. California, which is home to two of the largest knowledge-based industries—high technology and entertainment—has way more billionaires than New York, as well as four out of ten U.S. counties with the most millionaires. Once a bastion of New Right money, its wealthy counties now trend left. The state of Washington has followed a similar trajectory. Once known for cutting down trees and making airplanes, it is a high-tech mecca—the home of Microsoft—and has become a lock for Democratic presidential candidates.

The old economy rich haven't disappeared, but they are steadily falling behind. Fifty years ago, industrial giants dominated the *Fortune* 500; now, only six old economy companies rank among the top 20 firms. Today, nearly one-third of all the billionaires on the *Forbes* 400 made their fortunes from technology, finance, entertainment, and media—compared to about one-eighth of the list who made their money in energy, manufacturing, chemicals, lumber, or mining.

The old economy rich lean right for familiar reasons. If you run a meatpacking plant or chemical refinery, you're more likely to be in conflict with unions and government regulators. You don't depend on educated workers to the same degree and don't need to be as educated yourself. And, because many of these companies have moved

South to avoid unions altogether, you're increasingly located in red-state America where conservative values predominate.

The old economy rich still pump a fortune into politics, and this money goes overwhelmingly to Republicans. Their clout matters, only not as much as it used to. The mining industry, for example, is still powerful enough to subvert safety regulations, as we were reminded when 29 miners died in an April disaster in West Virginia. But it is no longer the power player it used to be. Political con-

tributions from the entire coal industry were \$3.48 million in 2008—while Microsoft employees alone contributed \$3.3 million.

TODAY'S RICH liberals have been shaped by the cultural and economic priorities of a knowledge economy. They are cosmopolitan in their outlook. They favor gay marriage and abortion rights. They support free trade—even as it devastates swaths of the American heartland—and want to encourage immigration, especially of workers with technical backgrounds. They understand



David Geffen, a member of the new technocratic liberal billionaires' club.

the science and, therefore, worry about the environment and global warming. They live in metro areas that also house many African Americans and the immigrant poor. They know that the economy is not working for everyone, and they want to do something about it. They embrace Andrew Carnegie's famous insight that individuals only get rich because society supports them—a truth all the more obvious in the information age.

Carnegie backed higher taxes, and today's new rich are doing the same thing.

Reed Hastings, a Silicon Valley veteran and the CEO of Netflix, published a *New York Times* op-ed titled "PLEASE RAISE MY TAXES" in early 2009. The article opposed a rule to cap CEO pay as misguided meddling and instead suggested a hefty 50 percent tax on salaries over \$1 million.

During the campaign, Obama backed a Senate bill that would double the taxes for hedge-fund managers, but, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, Democrats and Obama got 65 percent of the contributions from hedge funds that year. Hedge-fund billionaire Thomas Steyer threw one of the biggest Obama fundraisers of the entire campaign. Steyer told *Fortune*, "There is definitely

a strain in American capitalism where people believe that they have made the money on their own, basically working single-handedly as an individual to create wealth for themselves. I completely disagree." The hedge-fund rich did their share to blow up the economy, and some have lobbied against financial reforms, but they are surprisingly liberal on taxes.

The new economy rich often favor tax increases because, in contrast to Republicans and their business backers, they enthusiastically support increased government spending on education, health care, and scientific research. Long before Bill Gates took up causes like malaria, he fought to protect education spending in Washington state and lobbied Congress to pump vast additional funds into basic scientific research. Reed Hastings spent \$1 million, and Silicon

Valley venture capitalist John Doerr and his wife \$6 million, to pass a voter initiative in California that makes it easier to fund school construction. More recently, tech leaders have become big supporters of government doing more—much more—to support renewable-energy technologies. High-speed rail and faster broadband are also favorite causes.

Of course, not all the products of the knowledge economy became post-New Deal liberal Democrats. Some well-educated Wall Streeters helped start

the original Political Club for Growth, a prime funder of right-wing Republicanism. And some prominent veterans of the knowledge economy have become Republicans. But most of them, including Michael Bloomberg, Meg Whitman, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Mitt Romney, are or at least were moderates with outlooks only marginally different from those of high-tech Democrats. If, like Romney or Whitman (who gave Barbara Boxer \$4,000 in 2003), they have become more conservative, they have done so in order to court the rabidly conservative Republican primary electorate. Most of the new economy rich are in the political middle, where they have been more likely to feel comfortable in the Democratic Party.

THIS SHIFT toward the Democrats matters for politics because the new economy rich are loaded. When Bill Clinton ran for president in 1992, he raised a paltry \$84,000 from the Internet and computer industries. In 2008, Obama raised \$8.5 million from these industries, with over \$800,000 coming from employees at Google, a company that has produced several billionaires and hundreds of millionaires since going public in 2004, most of them Democrats. (Democrats received 82 percent of Google contributions in 2008; the number was 91 percent in 2006.) Santa Clara County, which covers Silicon Valley, now has many more millionaires than Manhattan and votes Democratic by nearly as high a margin. King County, which includes Seattle and Microsoft's Redmond, has more millionaires than any county on the Eastern Seaboard.

Wealthy technologists have also funded progressive organizations and media outlets. MoveOn.org was created by two successful software entrepreneurs. Quark founder Tim Gill is one of the biggest backers of gay rights, along with David Bohnett, who made his fortune from selling GeoCities to Yahoo. Rob Glaser, the founder of RealNetworks, helped bankroll Air America and has given millions to progressive groups. Jeffrey Skoll left eBay with several billion dollars to start a socially minded film company that produced *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Fast Food Nation*. Other seriously rich techies, such as Steve Kirsch and Mitch Kapor, have spread their money to a variety of liberal politicians and causes.

New economy wealth will keep reshaping the electoral map, and in ever more surprising ways. The once-conservative metro area of Omaha, for example, is being transformed by white-collar

industries and, in 2008, went for Obama. Even the upscale precincts of Dallas, now a major tech city, are growing more liberal. Obama raised far more money than any other candidate except for Rudy Giuliani, the least conservative of the Republicans, in Preston Hollow, the wealthy neighborhood where George W. Bush moved after he left the White House. Put that together with the movement of rural and a lot of white, working-class Americans into the Republican camp, and you have a map that looks dramatically different from New Deal America.

Nowhere has that been more apparent than in support for taxes and government spending. Earlier this year, voters in Oregon passed a ballot initiative jacking up taxes on the rich and on corporations. In the past, one would have expected opposition from the wealthy and support from the less well-to-do. But wealthy Oregonians, worried about the state's schools and public services,

helped the measure get through. It drew its strongest support from Portland and its affluent suburbs, a liberal hub of tech wealth, while many of the poorest white, working-class sections of the state, dominated by timber and farming, opposed raising taxes on the wealthy.

The economic trends that have created the new economy are going to continue, but what about these accompanying political trends? If the White House and the Democratic congressional leadership were to embrace economic policies that are anathema to the new economy rich, they could drive them out, or at least to the sidelines. Included here would be restrictions on corporate offshoring and outsourcing, which many Americans would welcome but many high-tech firms would adamantly oppose; any reduction in immigration by skilled workers; tariffs on imports that could provoke a trade war; and tough new financial regulations that could upend their profits.

There are Democrats who favor these measures, but, for the most part, the Obama administration does not. In fact, Obama's outlook is very similar to that of his wealthy backers. Obama believes in activist government and redistribution, but he also embraces markets and avoids populism. He has barely lifted a finger on behalf of labor unions' most important priority, the Employee Free Choice

Act—a measure that is important to their survival. This formula is maddening to the party's left, which points out how far short Obama falls from achieving real change, and is apparently incomprehensible to the right, which confuses Obama with Stalin or Lenin. But it is manna to Obama's billionaires.

The most prominent new economy rich are still helping the Democratic Party. On June 4, Google's Eric Schmidt, Cisco's CEO John Chambers, venture capitalists John Doerr and Brook Byers, and other Silicon Valley high-rollers held a fundraising event for Nevada Senator Harry Reid. Thomas Steyer has contributed recently to Democrats Barney Frank, Howard Berman, and Diane Feinstein, while Netflix CEO Reed Hastings is backing Barbara Boxer's reelection effort. And the Democrats who represent districts where the new economy wealthy live—Carolyn Maloney of the Upper East Side, Anna Eshoo of Sil-

icon Valley, Henry Waxman of Los Angeles, and Jim Himes of Greenwich—are expected to cruise to reelection.

New economy voters could also defect from the Democrats if the Republicans were to regularly nominate people like Schwarzenegger, Bloomberg, former New York Governor George Pataki, and Florida Governor Charlie Crist—particularly against left-wing Democrats. But, with the Tea Party growing more influential, the Republican Party appears to be moving further to the right rather than to the center. Crist is no longer welcome, and Republicans like Romney or Whitman are being forced to the right. So, it looks likely that, on a whole range of issues important to the new economy wealthy—from climate change, infrastructure funding, and education to abortion, gay marriage, and civil liberties—the Democrats will remain their party of choice. It is no wonder that Tea Party activists complain about liberal elites. The wealthiest of these not only helped Obama get elected, but are likely to keep him in office after 2012.

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In 1992, Bill Clinton raised \$84,000 from the Internet and computer industries. In 2008, Obama raised \$8.5 million.

The Breakup

Did Obama just dump his best friend on Wall Street?

NOAM SCHEIBER

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE of the way Barack Obama has changed the sociology of the capital. There's the shifting locus of social activity from Georgetown to Logan Circle, and the intrusion of two basketball hoops on the White House tennis court. But, even in Obama's Washington, some of the old status symbols still matter. Take, for instance, the periodic ritual of the state dinner. In advance of such affairs, the most recent of which occurred in May, entrails-readers up and down the Amtrak corridor still scrutinize the guest lists. Invariably, they find hints about who the White House is courting (Chris Dodd, Anthony Kennedy) and who it may be shunning (no Lindsey Graham?). To this day, there's still nothing like a state dinner sighting to shore up a hobbled official (Janet Napolitano), announce the arrival of an up-and-coming constituency (Univision anchor Jorge Ramos), or vouch for a wise man's access (Mack McLarty ...?). The Salahis may be tacky, but fools they were not.

Coming as it did near the climax of the financial-reform fight, the May dinner held particular interest for a certain class of status-conscious gossip: Wall Street executives. Read one way, the guest list functioned as a crude, if not terribly surprising, guide to the administration's financial-sector allegiances. Topping the list was Robert Wolf, CEO of UBS Americas, a longtime Obama fundraiser and confidant. Wolf was joined by James Gorman of Morgan Stanley, a firm with strong relationships at Treasury and the White House, and Brian Moynihan of Bank of America, whose bravery as a reformer Valerie Jarrett recently touted. Conversely, with his firm now short-hand for Wall Street double-dealing, no one should have been shocked to find Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein on the wrong side of the rope line.

But there was one invite decision that did seem vaguely curious: the omission of JP Morgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon. Unlike Citigroup or Lehman Brothers, Dimon's firm never teetered on the edge of collapse. Nor is JP Morgan run, à la Goldman, like a giant hedge fund backed by taxpayers. While the bank does have a significant trading operation, much of its revenue comes from dowdy loans to industrial companies and individual homeowners.

On top of which, Dimon is a longtime Democrat who traces his friendship with Obama back to Chicago, where he spent years running a predecessor company. For that matter, he's not just any Chicago Democrat with ties to Obama, but one who's spent the last few years painstakingly bolstering his bank's presence in Washington. In 2007, Dimon famously told his board that the company's government outreach was subpar and gave himself a "D" for his role in it. He elevated Bill Daley, the Democratic power broker who was then the bank's Midwestern chairman, to his operating committee and handed him the government-relations portfolio.

This proved to be a coup when Obama won the presidency. Daley had doubled as the campaign's co-chair. He'd been close to David Axelrod, Obama's top adviser, for 30 years. He'd also

helped revive the career of chief of staff Rahm Emanuel after Hillary Clinton exiled him from the White House inner sanctum in 1993. It was Daley who arranged to have Emanuel detailed to the administration's NAFTA war room, which he oversaw. According to sources close to the administration, the Obama transition team approached Daley about becoming ambassador to China. (He declined.)

All of which is to say, if anyone should be attending a state dinner these days, it's Dimon, whom *The New York Times* once dubbed "President Obama's favorite banker." And yet, as the months have passed, Dimon's frustration over the direction of administration policy has become palpable. He sarcastically referred to Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner as "Timmy" at an industry event last June; in April, he derided the administration's proposal for recouping bailout money as a "punitive bank tax."

In turn, Team Obama has sometimes marveled at Dimon's tone-deafness—"they don't really understand how toxic they are," one administration official complained to me—and distanced itself in ways subtle and not-so-subtle. It shut out the bank at key moments when crafting its financial overhaul and took a hard line when selling back the options on JP Morgan shares it acquired during the bailout. And then, there's the state dinner snub. "It's always easy to raise your profile in this environment," says one politically astute financier. "It's [not the same as] participating, making sure you're in." The executive continues: "Not being invited to the state dinner is not nice. They invited Bank of America." In fact, one gets the sense that JP Morgan sees the White House elevation of Bank of America—a recent Bloomberg headline blared, "MOYNIHAN BECOMES OBAMA'S TOP WALL STREET ALLY ON RULES OVERHAUL"—as a thinly veiled reprimand.

It's tough to make sense of all the back and forth. The White House has certainly styled itself as a bulwark against Wall Street excess. And Wall Street certainly bristles at the populist rhetoric and policy it sees emanating from the administration. But, as we reach the endgame on financial reform, just how frayed are Obama's ties to the industry, really? When you consider the story of how the White House has treated its best friend on Wall Street, the relationship begins to resemble nothing so much as a high school romance. It turns out even the best friend doesn't know if he's been dumped.

EVEN AMONG Wall Street Democrats, Dimon's liberalism sometimes stands out. There are, for example, dozens of bank executives and money managers who fancy themselves progressives because they back gay marriage and buy carbon offsets, even as they equate income redistribution with socialism. Dimon, though a staunch civil libertarian, doesn't define his progressivism so narrowly. "People are paying thirty percent taxes, forty percent taxes, making huge sums of money," he told me in a recent interview. "You've got to stop complaining. It's not just all about your own pocketbook."

Dimon is a broad-shouldered, almost hulking presence, with a gray crown of hair and a face that can pass from stormy to

serene and back in the course of a sentence. He spent his childhood in Queens, the grandson of a Greek immigrant, and at times still betrays an only-in-America-style wonderment at his family's good fortune. "A lot of people died building this country," he says earnestly. "All I'm saying is that people should acknowledge what this country gave them." He speaks in a hurried staccato, with more than a hint of his outer-borough upbringing. He has the perpetually hoarse voice of a high school basketball coach.

There may be no better example of Dimon's progressive instincts than JP Morgan's approach to health care. When he took over as the company's president in 2004, Dimon began requiring his highest-earning executives to pay substantially more in premiums than the average worker, so as to support their lower-paid colleagues. The company even features a strain of nanny-state paternalism. "[I]f a JP Morgan Chase employee has diabetes and we don't see claims for insulin and for eye exams, they get a phone call," he said at a recent health care conference. In the same speech, Dimon called for universal coverage and endorsed subsidies for those who couldn't afford it.

In many ways, this is in keeping with the historical archetype of the Wall Street progressive. For over a century, the standard model of government engagement—largely refined at JP Morgan itself—involved a seamless blending of public and private interest. The tradition dates back to George Perkins, a top lieutenant to the company's namesake and a friend of Teddy Roosevelt. As Ron Chernow notes in *The House of Morgan*, his history of the banking dynasty, Perkins was a prolific writer who helped promote Roosevelt's evolving vision of big business—big industrial trusts to power the economy and a big government to check them. Perkins dubbed it "socialism of the highest, best, and most ideal sort." (Left unsaid was that the Morgans typically dominated the private side of this arrangement.) Successive generations of Morgan men faithfully hewed to this pattern, partly out of recognition that the country's most powerful bank needed to be seen as acting in the nation's interest so as to defuse populist resentment.

Dimon is as public-minded as any of his predecessors, arguably more so. "They played a constructive role during the crisis," allows one administration official. At a meeting the day before Lehman collapsed, Dimon urged the assembled CEOs to pitch in for a private-sector bailout and started the bidding at \$1 billion, according to Andrew Ross Sorkin's *Too*

Big to Fail. One month later, when Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson prevailed upon the chiefs of the nation's nine biggest banks to accept \$125 billion in government capital, he assumed Dimon would be a reliable "yes" even as many of his colleagues kvetched. "When the system is at the point of cardiac arrest, it's a question of you got to do what you got to do," Dimon told me. "You should not be selfish." (It's worth noting that JP Morgan did benefit from the crisis in a variety of ways, including gobbling up onetime rivals Bear Stearns and Washington Mutual at discount-rack prices.)

In certain respects, Dimon and JP Morgan have continued to be model citizens ever since. Back in 2008, Daley hired a veteran Democratic lawyer named Peter Scher to manage the company's global government outreach day-to-day. Scher knew senior members of the Obama economic team from his tour as a Clinton administration trade official. He'd also managed John Edwards's vice presidential campaign and stayed in regular contact after the 2004 election, helping Edwards beef up his foreign policy credentials and serving as president of his Center for Promise and Opportunity, an anti-poverty group. Scher would go on to achieve minor fame as the sage voice who, after learning of the Rielle Hunter affair, pleaded with Edwards to forgo a second presidential run.

Scher had been won over by Dimon's belief, later articulated in a speech, that "[w]e corporate leaders have a responsibility to look beyond our own narrow, parochial interests . . . [and] support policies that are good for our country." Scher was part of a team that helped inject Dimon's ideas into the health care debate. He brokered meetings with top administration officials on a range of issues, such as how to increase small-business lending.

And yet, for all his genuine desire to do good, Dimon stands apart from the archetype of the Wall Street progressive in one key way: The old Morgan men blurred the line between the bank's interest and the country's so thoroughly that even they couldn't say where the first left off and the second began. The benefits of their relationships with government officials were usually unspoken, even unconscious, though they were no less real as a result. For his part, Dimon lacks the genteel grace of the famed Morgan partners. His manner doesn't evince a patience for oblique, meandering courtships—he recently complained to a congressman that they were "legislating too much" before abruptly hanging up the

phone. He is sometimes mystified by the ever-shifting coalitions that define Washington deal-making.

Unlike his Morgan predecessors, Dimon keeps two separate mental accounts—public and private interest—and is constantly, acutely aware of which actions fall where. When the two don't conflict, Dimon is prepared to promote the public good as scrupulously as if he were president. But, when the public interest is at odds with JP Morgan's, Dimon is not only the first to recognize it, he will weigh one against the other in near-clinical fashion. (Sorkin reports that Dimon stepped away from the October 2008 meeting with Paulson to tell his board the bailout would be "asymmetrically bad" for the company because it was healthier than its rivals.) If the costs to JP Morgan are more than incidental, or the threat to the financial system is less than existential, he will coolly resolve the tension in his own favor.

Dimon is plainly sincere when he urges his fellow CEOs to look beyond their parochial interests—he has done so over and over throughout his career. But looking beyond one's parochial interests doesn't preclude defending them as the need arises. And, over the last year and a half, Dimon has done so as fiercely and unapologetically as anyone on Wall Street, even when it's meant taking on the party he helped put in power.

OUTWARDLY, Dimon seemed to exult in the arrival of the Obama administration. He packed up his family and settled in for three days of inaugural festivities in Washington—a reception at the Mandarin Hotel one night, a dinner featuring the likes of Valerie Jarrett and Colin Powell the next.

Privately, though, he was concerned about what lay ahead. Dimon first made a name for himself helping to build what became Citigroup during the 1980s and '90s. But, in 1998, when he was president and heir apparent to CEO Sandy Weill, the company abruptly fired him. The move came after months of bickering between the onetime mentor and protégé, but it still stung Dimon acutely. As he clawed his way back to the top of the industry, observers couldn't help notice that he took special pride in besting his old firm. "His overwhelming desire was basically to prove that they were wrong to push him out," says an administration official. Suddenly, the prospect of reform threatened everything he'd worked for.

While the country was buzzing over the inauguration, a group of lobbyists representing its biggest banks assembled in

a sleek, wood-paneled conference room at the Washington law firm of Cleary Gottlieb to finalize their counter-strategy on reform. In moments of crisis, populists are almost always too quick to find cabals of bankers lurking around every corner. Cabals of bank lobbyists, on the other hand—well, that's another story. Dimon's troops had been at the center of the planning for months and helped lead the meeting.

The main component of the strategy involved derivatives, the financial instrument that allows investors to bet on the price movements of other assets, like stocks and bonds. The banks knew derivatives reform was coming: AIG had used them to bet on steadily rising housing prices, then suffered billions in losses when the real estate market tanked. Worse, AIG had nearly taken down several big firms on the other side of its bets when it couldn't pay up. For the five major U.S. dealers that dominate the market—JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, Bank of America, and Morgan Stanley—the problem was that derivatives represented billions in annual earnings. They wanted to limit the hit to their bottom line. (“Bank” and “dealer” are synonymous in this context.)

The solution was to embrace the practice of clearing—that is, posting collateral to a middleman, who can step in to make a company's betting partners whole if the company melts down. To be sure, clearing was potentially costly: Research by the IMF suggests it could have forced the industry to raise an additional \$200 billion in capital off the bat. But it was preferable to trading derivatives on exchanges, which would erode the margins the banks made connecting buyers and sellers and which many reformers were already advocating. The reason—and this is critical—is that the dealers reckoned they could finesse the new requirements and persuade Congress to exempt large classes of derivatives from them.

This is where a JP Morgan lobbyist named Kate Childress stepped in. Tall and blond, Childress had just joined the company. She was a Democrat in good standing—a former adviser to Chuck Schumer—and had worked on the Senate Banking Committee.

In regular conference calls hosted by an industry group in the weeks leading up to the Cleary Gottlieb meeting, Childress stressed the need to highlight the industrial companies that use derivatives to hedge risk rather than speculate—so-called “end users.” “JP Morgan, this was their ingenious contribution,” says one person on the calls. Anyone could

see that the banks were reviled in the aftermath of the crisis. But the end users—like airlines, which use derivatives to lock in fuel prices—were sympathetic, and they hailed from every congressional district in the country. “What they wanted was, ‘Hey, let's get the dopey end users to go out and be the face of reform,’” recalls another person who participated in the strategizing. “‘We don't have the credibility.’”

Childress urged the other big banks to contact the chief financial officers of their corporate clients and warn that their derivatives could disappear or become prohibitively expensive unless they appealed to Congress. The other lobbyists assented. The hope, according to a source privy to the calls and to internal planning documents, was that pressure from end users would help preserve the status quo on the derivatives the dealers sold to firms like hedge funds—which is to say, many of their most lucrative bets. “What you really had was fear,” says this person, fear that the profits from derivatives would evaporate. “Anybody who has an idea was going to be listened to ... [and] Kate had conviction. She was very, very convincing.”

A handful of end users were on the initial calls and grumbled about their role in the plan. But, as a group, the end users did eventually become the public face of a well-financed campaign. Not long after the Cleary Gottlieb meeting, the bank lobbyists huddled again for a “pitch day” featuring a handful of p.r. firms. The firms were competing for a contract to boost the image of the derivatives industry by touting all the honest, job-creating end users who relied on them. Goldman and Credit Suisse joined JP Morgan in funding the blitz. (Citigroup and Bank of America steered clear of the p.r. project.)

Soon, the end users were flocking to Capitol Hill to plead for leniency. One congressional aide with years of experience in these issues told me he'd never heard the phrase “end user” before the summer, at which point it was cropping up everywhere. “From their perspective, that's a fairly beneficial term. It seems to have caught on,” he said. By December, the campaign had paid dividends. The House passed a financial-reform bill that included an exemption not just for bona fide end users, but for any company that used derivatives to hedge “commercial,” “operating,” or “balance sheet risk”—a loophole wide enough to protect a variety of high-risk transactions among Wall Street firms. The industry assumed the regulations would weaken even further in the Senate, which is traditionally more industry-friendly.

TO ANYONE paying attention, however, there were signs that the triumph could be short-lived. Last July, JP Morgan had invited Rahm Emanuel to appear at its board meeting in Washington. There was nothing especially sinister about the invitation. Emanuel had known Dimon since his days in the Clinton White House. He'd been friends with Daley even longer. In this case, both sides believed it would be helpful to compare notes on the economy. But, when news of the appearance hit *The New York Times*, Emanuel abruptly withdrew. By the time the House passed its reform bill five months later, the White House was at pains to avoid misjudging the popular mood again. The same weekend, Obama groused to “60 Minutes” that he “did not run for office to be helping out a bunch of fat cat bankers on Wall Street.”

If Dimon took these shots personally, it wasn't hard to see why. On one level, the crisis brought him vindication. For years, he'd preached the virtues of conservative risk-management and a “fortress balance sheet” that would arm JP Morgan to withstand any turmoil it faced. He'd largely abstained as other banks gorged on subprime securities. When Weill's chosen successor, Chuck Prince, resigned in disgrace from Citigroup in late 2007, Dimon was increasingly regarded as the industry's best manager. “[His view is] the other guys screwed up—Citi and those idiots. We did well. Had I been there, they would have been fine,” says an administration official.

And yet, for all the adulation Dimon received on Wall Street, these distinctions largely eluded the public consciousness, to Dimon's everlasting frustration. Indeed, if there was a common strand to Dimon's comments after the crisis, it was his resentment over being viewed as a bailed-out CEO, when in fact he took the government money as an act of good faith—so that rivals who really needed it wouldn't be stigmatized. (Of course, even JP Morgan's unassailable balance sheet would have been assailed had the crisis spread further.) But, instead of being heralded for this public-mindedness, Dimon found himself the target of populist attacks and an escalating reform offensive. “The incessant broad-based vilification of the banking industry isn't fair and it is damaging,” Dimon told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Around the time of Obama's “fat cat” taunt, the Treasury Department began working to reverse the backsliding on derivatives. By late March, Treasury and its Senate allies had narrowed the loophole considerably. It narrowed even

further as the White House weighed in after its health care success. Soon, Obama was vowing to “veto legislation that does not bring the derivatives market under control.”

At certain moments, the banks couldn't tell if the administration was harnessing populist frustrations or getting pulled along by them. Administration officials seemed to relish pointing out the ways Wall Street was undermining reform. Deputy Treasury Secretary Neal Wolin dwelled on the “one point four million dollars per day already being spent ... by big banks and Wall Street financial firms” in a speech before the Chamber of Commerce. Whatever the case, the atmosphere was rapidly deteriorating. On a Sunday in mid-May, hundreds of protestors converged on Scher's home in suburban Maryland.

The executives at JP Morgan reacted to these developments with growing dismay. Under Dimon, they'd heavily favored Democrats in their giving to congressional campaign committees. Last fall, the company held fundraisers for the campaign arms of both the House and Senate Republicans, according to sources familiar with the events. As one friend of Dimon's told me recently, “It's hard for him to support the people he thinks are out to crush his bank.”

Dimon's lobbyists also dug in deeper. Congressional aides I spoke with proclaimed JP Morgan's Capitol Hill contingent the most relentless in fighting reform. In April, Childress attended an event hosted by an industry group called the Financial Services Forum featuring Mark Wetjen, a senior aide to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. Reid had dispatched Wetjen to field questions from anxious industry officials, but Childress was not appeased. When it was her turn to speak, she grilled Wetjen so aggressively the other lobbyists in the room were practically speechless.

It's doubtful that Jamie Dimon ever instructed his lobbyists to badger Senate staffers. And the company's top government hands, Daley and Scher, are widely viewed as tactful. It's their job to ease tensions in Washington, after all, not ratchet them up. But, given that members of the company's high command visit the capital several times a month and take a hands-on role in the firm's dealings there, it stands to reason that its rank-and-file operatives would channel their defiant stance.

IF THE STORY of JP Morgan and Barack Obama is the story of an awkward dance gone, well, painfully awkward,

then the week leading up to Friday, January 22, may have been the most disorienting of all. Eight days earlier, the White House blindsided the banking industry by proposing a fee to recoup the \$117 billion in government bailout money it deemed unlikely to be repaid. The fee would cost JP Morgan alone billions of dollars and prompted outrage up and down Wall Street.

Then, the following Thursday, two days after Scott Brown stunned the world by winning Ted Kennedy's seat in Massachusetts, the White House unveiled the so-called Volcker Rule. The idea was to block federally insured banks from a lucrative activity known as proprietary trading—essentially making bets for their own bottom line. “When banks benefit from the safety net that taxpayers provide,” the president said, “it is not appropriate for them to turn around and use that cheap money to trade for profit.” He went on to denounce the “soaring profits and obscene bonuses” at banks that claimed they couldn't afford to increase lending. The JP Morgan brass was alarmed.

The next day, though, it was as if all had been forgotten. The nomination of Ben Bernanke for a second term as Federal Reserve chairman was suddenly losing altitude in the Senate. For a brief moment, it looked like it might crash, something the administration feared could damage the financial markets. Treasury officials asked Scher if senior JP Morgan executives could call a few senators to help put the nomination back on track, which they agreed to do without hesitation. By the time the White House called the following Monday to invite Dimon to lunch, Bernanke's nomination looked assured.

Which brings us to a final, enduring frustration for Dimon and JP Morgan: For all the friction in both directions, the company believes its relationship with the administration is actually far better than the White House and the media let on. One persistent source of annoyance is an April *Wall Street Journal* piece that played up a standoff between Emanuel and Daley over the administration's proposed consumer agency. (Dimon *et al* say they aren't wild about the consumer agency but have never been especially exercised by the idea; administration officials maintain that they encountered strong resistance from JP Morgan on the issue.) Dimon also chafes at the notion of a blowup during negotiations over the stock options Treasury acquired during the bailout, a staple of JP Morgan coverage this last year. “I think Tim Geithner

and I would both say the same thing: It was not an issue,” Dimon told me. “We didn't dig in on that thing.”

Broadly speaking, they have a point. Despite the occasional jab—or state dinner snub—the administration's actions suggest it does consider JP Morgan to be a reasonable, often helpful interlocutor. In early June, for example, the Fox business website reported that JP Morgan had the “inside track” to become one of two lead underwriters for the government spinoff of General Motors. (Morgan Stanley will be the other.) The IPO is regarded as a real trophy on Wall Street; every major firm competed for the business. Suffice it to say, it's hardly the kind of prize you bestow on public enemy number one.

Still, the aggrieved way in which Dimon takes the abuse Washington sometimes doles out suggests that the firm's presence there will never be seamless. If you talk to Daley or Scher, they will instinctively minimize the company's slights: Nothing they haven't seen dozens of times, on either side of a government paycheck, maybe even instigated themselves. “We're all adults,” says Daley. “We've all been through this stuff.” Scher seemed unfazed when I asked about the protestors who'd descended on his home last month. “I was mostly disappointed that these were the tactics the labor movement was now adopting,” he told me.

But there's a part of Dimon that will never be at peace with playing the bad guy, never relent until he's accorded due respect. “It's never fair to punish everybody regardless of their behavior,” he told me at one point. “There are good banks and bad banks just like there are good politicians and bad politicians, and I'm not going to sit here and accept that somehow it's OK.”

In fairness, Dimon is right: Tough-minded financial reform *is* a kind of collective punishment. It isn't entirely fair to him. The mistake is to conclude that his singular successes justify the fight against it. In fact, they demonstrate the opposite. If every Wall Street executive were as exacting and far-seeing as Dimon, Washington wouldn't be obsessed with reform because the crisis wouldn't have happened. But that's obviously not the case. God help us if our plan going forward is to count on everyone acting like Jamie Dimon. Certainly Dimon himself, the preeminent risk manager of his generation, would never take such a chance. At least not if he were sitting on the other side of the table. ♦



Books & the Arts

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS FACT AND FAMILIARITY

‘WAR IS HELL.” General Sherman’s three-word definition has never been surpassed. He meant to dispel prevalent notions about glory, which he called moonshine. Factual knowledge, he apparently thought, would diminish war. The still camera had already started to support him; now there are also film and video. Today, however, Sherman might be bemused to see that,

though factual knowledge has vastly increased, war has not exactly diminished.

The latest addition to factuality about war is an exceptional documentary called *Restrepo*. A few years ago Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger arranged to have themselves embedded with a platoon of American soldiers being deployed to an outpost in Afghanistan—embedded at least to the extent that sometimes singly, sometimes together, the two men made ten trips of a month each during the platoon’s fifteen-month assignment there. (Junger has also published a book called *War* about his Afghan experiences.) Their intent was to document soldiers’ lives—daily doings in which fierce firefights were part of the form as factory hours are to a mechanic. Obviously the emotional atmosphere, heightened and dulled by turns, was not the same as a factory’s, but the film is meant to distill the essence of dailiness through those fifteen months, twenty-four hours a day. Despite its terse ninety minutes, it succeeds.

Second Platoon, Battle Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade was aware from the start that its station in the Korengal Valley would be tough. The captain tells his men before they leave that he had been warned that they would “take fire” from the Taliban. They soon do, and they dig in. Supplied apparently by helicopter, they get the post in shape, then begin their patrols and explo-

rations. Not long afterward, their medic, Juan Restrepo, is killed, and the men name their post in his honor.

We soon have the feeling of slogging ahead on a dangerous journey, fifteen months long, banality and crisis mixed day by day. Firefights are violent: off-duty interludes with guitar are poignantly easy. Often members of the platoon meet elders of an Afghan village nearby, endeavoring to enlist their support even though the villagers are constantly warned by the Taliban against collaborating. The villagers are also more than aggravated by the accidental killing of some of their people by American soldiers. (Part of the effect of the film is the placement of these killings in scale, as incidents, not as grievous as they would be elsewhere—simply regrettable incidents that can happen in these circumstances and do.) When at last the platoon is relieved, we almost

feel the relief ourselves. The film-makers have had the useful idea of inserting throughout some comments by platoon survivors, interviewed after their return to base. These affecting moments, done always in large close-up, give a rounded effect to the whole enterprise. The fifteen months almost become a whole and weighty object that we can look at.



Hetherington and Junger clearly won acceptance by the men who never acknowledge the camera’s presence. The film-makers say that in order to get permission for their project, they had to promise to omit political comment of any kind. They kept their word. But we are not so obligated. It is hard not to remember that this film—reporting a small part of a gigantic upheaval—is part of the long-lasting result of some governmental decisions. It is also hard not to remember Sherman. The lives of these soldiers evoke both admiration and bitterness.



RESTREPO
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
ENTERTAINMENT

**HUMAN RIGHTS
WATCH
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL**

LET IT RAIN
IFC FILMS

RESTREPO is available two ways. It is being released by itself as a feature attraction, and it is also included in that annual benison, the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. This year is the festival’s twenty-first edition, with thirty films from twenty-five countries. The festival may

suffer a bit from its name. The organization that creates it deserves all the credit it can get, yet the name makes it sound as if the chief reason for seeing these pictures is that they are good for us. They are good for us. Also, so far as I have been able to sample them each year, they are good pictures.

This year I have seen two besides *Restrepo*. Another American entry is *12th & Delaware* by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady. The title is a crossroads in Fort Pierce, Florida. On one corner is a pregnancy care center: right across the street, facing it, is the headquarters of a pro-life group. Throughout the film the pro-life people picket the center, which of course functions, among other ways, as an abortion advisory. The picketers, besides the expected placards, also flourish models of fetuses at various stages.

This Ewing-Grady film clings to the principle of human rights. It assumes that the pro-lifers have rights too, what-

ANTHONY RUSSO

ever our beliefs may be, and they are given seemingly equal screen time. The woman at the pregnancy center whom we get to know is reasonable, patient, unexploitative, much more engaging than her opponents. Still, the point of the picture is to present the conflict face-to-face, not to propagandize. Ewing and Grady have managed to keep their film fluent, rather than chunks of static data. As for our own beliefs, the picture will probably heat them.

Presumed Guilty is Mexican, filmed by Roberto Hernández and Layda Negrete, and directed by Hernández and Geoffrey Smith. It follows the story of Toño Zúñiga, who is arrested in Mexico City for a murder of which he knows absolutely nothing. Apparently the police needed to arrest someone, and Toño filled the bill sufficiently. He was convicted on the basis of what is apparently the local law—presumption of guilt until proved innocent. Hernández and Negrete follow the tortuous proceedings through the next few years trying to see that justice is done. The editing is nimble, the appearances by Toño are moving, and the odds seem awful. The ending is a surprise.

If we wonder how Hernández and Negrete got permission to do their filming inside prisons, we might note skeptically that every room and hallway we see is scrupulously clean. We may be permitted to doubt, from other sources, that this is always the case: authorities might have cleaned locations up as a little propaganda of their own.

As usual, after the New York premiere of the full festival, versions of the program will visit forty cities in the United States and Canada. As usual, too, though some of the items are grim, it is cheering once again to know that gifted people are addressing important subjects around the world—and are doing it with talent. Information about visits and availabilities is at www.hrw.org/iff.

A FRENCH FILM called *Let It Rain*, pliant and comfortable, advances a quite different sort of cause. In recent years a genre has been slipping into the film world so subtly that it is now fairly well established without much comment. Call it the Intimate Film. Several countries have supplied instances. It is a picture that wants to put us in the company of a group of people, with the principal purpose of acquaintance, not drama.

The genre's core is proportion. A baby's smooth skin is full of alpine crevices under the right glass. Relatively undramatic lives are jagged under an intense

camera. The point is not to make mountains out of molehills. Rather, it is to show how film can investigate some kinds of human travail without large-scale traditional engines of drama.

Agnès Jaoui and Jean-Pierre Bacri, in their third venture together, have opted for this intimacy. They could hardly have committed themselves more fully: they co-wrote the script, they play two of the leading roles, and Jaoui directed. She sets the tone from the first shot: two men, conversing, move past the camera away from us into the story. We go along with them.

The place is southern France, the birthplace of Agathe Villanova (played by Jaoui). She is a prominent feminist who comes down from Paris to help her married sister Florence with family matters and, not quite incidentally, to run in a local election. While Agathe is there, two local film-makers, Michel (played by Bacri) and a young Algerian named Karim, ask her if they may film an interview with her. She agrees, but things do not always go smoothly. The work on the interview, plus Michel's gradually re-

vealed involvement with Florence, plus Karim's doings, are some of the matters that course onward. We soon realize that the picture's being is the sum of all these stories rather than a grand conflict.

In the Intimate Film the performances must carry the day. Jaoui is so commanding as Agathe that it is intriguing to remember that she is directing herself. Bacri is humorous and appealing as Michel, with just a slight tendency to italicize his expressions and gestures. Pascale Arbillot provides a Florence at that point in her life when she might leave her marriage even though it has up to now been all right. The Algerian Jamel Debbouze, as Karim, is uniquely vital as a gifted film editor who fills in between jobs as a hotel reception clerk.

With her directing Jaoui maintains the invitation of the opening shot. The title, we are told elsewhere, was suggested by a French song about a man who hates fine weather. One sequence in a torrential storm puts this quirk to the test. But rain or shine, Jaoui's film is a pleasant place to be. ♦

Jackson Lears THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUCE

THE PUBLISHER:
HENRY LUCE AND
HIS AMERICAN CENTURY

By Alan Brinkley
(Knopf, 531 pp., \$35)

I.
SOMETIMES human beings bring sociological theory to life. Consider the career of Henry Luce. A child of Presbyterian missionaries in China, he pursued wealth and power with unrelenting zeal, creating the media empire that dominated American journalism for much of the twentieth century: Time, Inc. Yet Luce never lost touch with his didactic origins, never abandoned the conviction that his magazines should teach Americans the right way of thinking about the world. Few men have more fully embodied the tense alliance between the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Jackson Lears is editor of RARITAN and author, most recently, of REBIRTH OF A NATION: THE MAKING OF MODERN AMERICA, 1877–1920 (Harper).

When Max Weber coined those terms, he never meant to equate them. Rather he argued that Protestant morality provided the psychological sanctions for systematic striving—for conduct that, in a more secular social context, could serve the needs of capitalism. Accumulated capital was an unsought by-product of diligent labor in a calling. The successful Protestant (if he remained a Protestant) could not rest content with mere money. However much he may have wanted wealth and even (fitfully) enjoyed it, he remained ill at ease in Zion, focusing his desires on more exalted aims. Accumulation and display—the world of outward appearances—meant less than nothing; what mattered was the inner piety that animated a life of service to the community.

Luce was nothing if not a successful Protestant, as Alan Brinkley shows in his superb biography. Using years of research from archives and interviews, Brinkley steers a careful course between sympathy and critique. He disdains hagiography and transcends hostility. For the most part this strategy works beautifully:

Brinkley tells a gripping story, painting a fully rounded portrait of a difficult, complex, and powerful man, as well as providing an extraordinarily illuminating account of the interplay between politics and culture in America during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. His cinematic tale is crowded with dictators and demagogues, with society dames patrolling social boundaries and half-drunk writers straining to meet deadlines. It should be shot in black and white—the clean no-colors of a *Life* documentary, but also the way the mature Luce came to view the world.

Yet Brinkley's Luce comes across not only as a rigid moralist and a status seeker, but also (at various times) as a critic of irresponsible capital, a supporter of labor unions, and a racial liberal. At least fitfully tolerant and humane even in his later years, Luce in many ways epitomized that nearly extinct species, the moderate Republican. He merged Protestant and capitalist versions of noblesse oblige; he would redeem private gain, he hoped, through public service. He preached a new gospel for a new society dominated by mass-marketed surfaces. Luce flourished in the world of mere appearances that traditional Protestants scorned, a world that was now inescapable thanks to the pervasive presence of photography and film.

Luce's media empire pioneered techniques appropriate to its Fordist moment, the mid-twentieth-century apex of mass production—in particular the modernist documentary photography that was the stock-in-trade of *Life*. Margaret Bourke-White, David Douglas Duncan, and other photographers snapped heroic scenes of private and public struggle, disaster, hilarity, and fulfillment: these were the images (along with those in Hollywood movies) that helped to create a visually based national community out of the anomie of the Depression. They accompanied, and in some ways constituted, Luce's gospel of the American Way of Life—a life that he imagined could be homogeneous, classless, economically secure, and racially tolerant. He preached a civil religion for an emerging affluent society.

While Luce's magazines manufactured the cultural consensus (or the belief in it) that characterized the mid-century decades, his desire to bring ideas to a mass audience attracted intellectuals impatient with literary coteries. For a while his stable at *Fortune* included Dwight Macdonald, Archibald MacLeish, James Agee, and Walker Evans. (Their struggles with Luce and with one another are

deftly evoked by Robert Vanderlan in *Intellectuals Incorporated: Politics, Art, and Ideas Inside Henry Luce's Media Empire*, a fine companion volume to Brinkley's book.) Through much of the Great Depression, Luce remained remarkably open to provocative and even heretical ideas.

By the late 1930s, however, as the world grew darker and Luce's attention turned to foreign affairs, his moral commitments intensified and his openness yielded to dogmatic certainty. The result was "The American Century," a *Life* essay in February 1941 that urged Americans to take on the burdens of world leadership—not only in the necessary fight against fascism but also in a much grander and more diffuse struggle "to promote, encourage, and incite so-called democratic principles throughout the world." "The American Century" harnessed Luce's missionary impulses to an exceptionalist and interventionist foreign policy: it assumed that the United States had a divine mission to organize the world, and it redefined the national interest as global and virtually limitless. As Brinkley writes, by the time he first read Luce's essay "in the grim, antiwar climate of the 1970s, the essay seemed to me an obsolete relic of an earlier, more muscular, and now repudiated American age. Little did I know how soon its sentiments would be popular again." Or, he might have added, how disastrous the effects of its revival would be.

Brinkley devotes less critical attention to Luce's overarching American Century theme than to the publisher's more controversial concerns, such as his obsession with the "loss" of China. So Brinkley never tries to demonstrate how "popular" Luce's vision of American exceptionalism was (or was not). Nor does he explore the ways that vague phrases such as "the burden of leadership" could substitute for more precise idioms of empire, then and now—clouding clear definitions of national interest and preventing the possibility of genuine debate. Lofty sentiments always deserve careful scrutiny, but especially when they are uttered by a preacher's son whose main commitments (as he said) were to "God, the Republican Party, and free enterprise." Luce looks statesmanlike in comparison with contemporary Republicans (and more than a few Democrats); but his vision of an American Century still incites bipartisan arrogance. The ambiguities of interventionism—above all the difficulty of distinguishing it from imperialism—remain his most enduring legacy.

II.

LUCE'S FATHER, Henry Winters Luce, was the son of a wholesale grocer in Scranton, Pennsylvania—a member of the "commercial gentry" with great expectations for his son. Propelled by his own and his father's ambition, Henry found himself at Yale in the 1880s, where he fell in with a religious crowd. Soon he had decided to witness for God in "the uttermost parts of the earth." Preparing for missionary work, he took his ministerial degree at Union Theological Seminary and married Elisabeth Root of Scranton, a pious girl from a broken home. By September 1897 they were on their way to China, three months after their wedding, having already conceived their first child.

Henry Robinson Luce was born in April 1898 in Tengchow, on the Shantung coast. ("Robinson" was homage to a beloved pastor in Scranton.) His mother kept the house "wickedly clean" with the help of a staff of servants, including an amah for the young Harry. This Chinese woman taught him his first words, which were Chinese. When the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists (the "Boxers") threatened to purge the locality of "foreign devils," Harry's amah helped the Luces to escape to Korea. They did not return until the Boxer Rebellion was crushed by a combined force of European, American, and Japanese troops in the summer of 1900. The pattern was already in place: missionaries seeking souls in the shadow of imperial struggles.

Like other missionary families, the Luces lived a middle-class Victorian life. Two sisters and a brother joined Harry during the next several years. Outside their homogenous and insulated compound, all was harsh and chaotic; inside all was ordered harmony, governed by Presbyterian Christianity, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and the Montgomery Ward catalogue. Harry explored the countryside but never the cities, and he never learned much Chinese despite his lifelong passion for China. Early on he modeled himself on the men around him—ministers all. By the time he was four he was delivering impromptu sermons on a barrel in front of his house. Soon he could no longer be schooled at home, and he was off to a British boarding school at Chefoo. The loneliness and the loathsome food did nothing to dampen his ambition; he kept obsessive track of his grades and class ranking, while he strained for success in tennis and debating. (The last posed a special challenge to a boy with a stammer.)

Meanwhile the Chinese empire was collapsing. In 1912, the emperor abdicated, and Sun Yat-sen became president. "It may turn out to be the ... most stupendous Reformation in all history," Harry wrote to his parents. The choice of words was significant: Reformation was superior to revolution, and suggested that China was on the civilizing track to Western modernity, via Protestantism and democracy. This was Reverend Luce's point of view as well. China, he believed, must raise itself to Western levels of education and civilization, at which point the Chinese would be ready to choose Christianity, rather than have it thrust upon them. He pursued his civilizing mission by promoting a Christian university in Shantung and seeking funds for it in the United States.

His son watched, often from afar, profoundly impressed by his father's determination to do good. By the time Harry left Chefoo for Hotchkiss School in Connecticut (one of his father's former teachers had arranged a scholarship), he and his father had established what Brinkley calls "a pattern of long-distance intimacy" that they would maintain for decades. Harry absorbed his father's energy and ambition and seriousness, but not his otherworldly goodness—and this lack tormented him. As Brinkley writes, "Harry learned from his father to think of life as a great mission, to be judged by its contribution to the betterment of the world. But unlike his father, he also developed a considerable appetite for wealth, power, and worldly success." The conflict between his father's Protestant ethic and his own spirit of Capitalism spurred young Harry to heroic exertions.

The interior strain showed up in his stammer. As he later recalled, "nothing in the world could possibly be more painful." Before he went to Hotchkiss his parents sent him to St. Albans School in England, where a tutor who was supposedly a specialist in such matters declared that Harry's "evil habit" was "absolutely imaginary," and set about to break it. His father urged the boy on: "The whole question, of course, is of your getting control of your speech again." Harry's quest for control proved arduous—the tutor was no help—but gradually he got a grip on his stammer.

Then he was off to Hotchkiss, a sluiceway to Yale and one of the many institutions (prep schools, country clubs, exclusive suburbs) created around the turn of the century to confirm the credentials of an emerging upper class. Luce was painfully aware of his inferior status

as a scholarship boy, cleaning the chapel every day and waiting on the other lads at table. He never identified with the other scholarship boys and always imagined he belonged on the other side of the class divide. Determined not to be an outsider, he schooled himself in football rules and other elements of American popular culture, most of which were new to him. He never resented hazing rituals but only looked forward to the time when he would be their initiator rather than their victim.

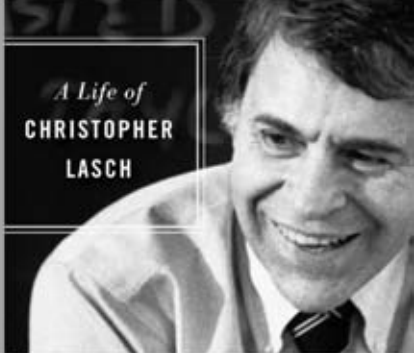
That time was not far off. "Always calculating, always striving," as Brinkley remarks, Luce managed to excel at public speaking, debating, and academic work.

Yet even his triumphs contained a dose of frustration. To his bitter disappointment he finished second in his class, "behind a terrible greasy grind," and he became editor of the second most prestigious literary magazine. The top publication was headed by Brit Hadden, a charismatic boy from a wealthy Brooklyn banking family whom Brinkley inexplicably calls "middle class." Hadden and Luce became rivals and friends; eventually they would found *Time* together. They were an odd couple: Hadden a Dodgers fan with conventional Anglo-Saxon prejudices and a wise-ass mouth, Luce a serious and socially awkward scholar, more cosmopolitan than Hadden

Hope

in a Scattering Time

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PUBLISHING CO.
2140 Oak Industrial Drive NE
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but also less critical of American culture, where he still felt an interloper.

At Yale their friendship and their rivalry deepened. Social status was everything there, and the “big men” acquired it by election to the *Yale Daily News* or to the Skull and Bones society—not by academic achievement. Connections always helped, and the smell of money was in the air. Unlike Hadden, Luce was still on a tight budget. But he no longer carried the stigma of a scholarship boy, thanks to his summer earnings as well as help from his parents and the farm-implement heirless Nettie McCormick (who had taken a shine to him years before, when the family visited her in Chicago on one of Reverend Luce’s fundraising trips). He often stayed with Nettie on vacations, when she introduced him to a rarefied world of boating parties and debutante balls. His pulse quickened in the presence of money and power; his longings for social ascent intensified.

Soon he was satisfied, at least temporarily. After a frantic year of “heeling” at the *Daily News*, he was one of four freshmen elected to the staff of the paper. The two who came in ahead of him were Hadden and another Hotchkiss boy. Harry Luce was becoming an insider. A month later, in April 1917, the United States entered World War I. There was no question about Luce’s views: Theodore Roosevelt had been his boyhood hero, and now, he wrote to his father, “another form of strenuous life is forced upon me”—stoking war fever in the *Daily News*. Soon he joined Army ROTC, and spent a few months in South Carolina training raw recruits who had never seen a toothbrush. When he returned to Yale in January 1919, it was time to embark on the quest to “go Bones.” Tap day was anxiety, then ecstasy. He and Brit both made Bones. They were big men.

Senior year was a satisfying anticlimax. He wrote a thesis on Theodore Roosevelt and public opinion under the supervision of the British political scientist Harold Laski and overcame his stammer to win the DeForest Prize in public speaking. His Wilsonian speech, “When We Say ‘America,’” urged the nation to “be the great comrade of all nations that struggle to rise to higher planes of social and political organization, and withal the implacable and immediate foe of whatever nation shall offer to disturb the peace of the world.” There was a Christian and a familial brotherliness here (appropriate for the minister’s eldest son): America would uplift and protect its vulnerable siblings. The speech was a portent.

III.

AFTER YALE, Luce continued his systematic cultivation of connections. Supported in part by Nettie McCormick, he spent a postgraduate year at Oxford, postponing career choices, sharpening up his bridge and tennis, fitfully overcoming his social awkwardness as he squired rich girls around London and (whenever he could arrange it) Paris and Rome as well. His family feared he was absorbing the prejudices of the idle rich. He denied it. Yet his dismissal of the “backward” cultures that he encountered on the Continent suggested that his inherited tolerance was hardening into something more conventional. Earnest uplift was increasingly mixed with disdainful superiority.

One of the rich girls in Rome was the aptly named Lila Hotz. The daughter of a prominent Chicago family, she was spending the obligatory year abroad after finishing at Spence School. Well read and intelligent, though not as serious as Luce, she was also a dark-haired, dark-eyed knockout. Harry was smitten, and soon determined to marry her. He had to persuade her parents that his earnings would meet their standards. Pursuing her back to Chicago, he took a job with the *Chicago News*, but it did not last long. Desperate to get some financial traction, he was considering a management job in a New York machine manufacturing firm when word came from Hadden that they both had job offers from the *Baltimore News*—courtesy of Walter Millis, a Bonesman who worked there. Luce and Hadden snapped it up. They shared rooms in a tumbledown mansion, where in the evenings they plotted the project they had been talking about since their days on the *Yale Daily News*.

At first they called it *Facts*. It would be a weekly “news-magazine”—an alternative to the numbing detail of *The New York Times* and to the stuffy gentility of the respectable monthlies; a magazine for young businessmen like themselves, in a hurry, who needed a quick digest of the news. Hadden pressed the cautious Luce to keep “the gamble of our lives” moving forward, to seek powerful and influential investors through their Bones connections. Sometimes the quest for money was humiliating. (“Of course, any loose change I have is yours,” a rich Yale classmate told them.) Luce envied and resented his contemporaries who had inherited great wealth. Still, by October 1922, he and Hadden had raised enough money to launch the magazine that they had re-named *Time*.

The early numbers of the magazine

were characterized by rigid organization, concise news summaries, lively language, whimsical diversions, and sophomoric opinions. The first issue lamented the high literary reputation of “The Waste Land” and the high percentage of “Orientals” in the population of Hawaii. Such views were predictable enough for a staff composed of white male Protestants from elite universities. Luce and Hadden were not out to uplift the masses, at least not yet. To satisfy their investors, they needed a magazine that would sell.

Haltingly but inexorably, *Time*’s circulation climbed. It made a hit among the young managerial classes in the urban Northeast, but also in places such as Cincinnati and Denver. Its founders had tapped into precisely the national market that they had hoped to reach. As *Time*’s fortunes improved, so did Luce’s chances with Lila. She was the spur that pricked the sides of his intent. He was desperate: “The main thing is to win and nothing is justified except in that perspective,” he wrote her in the fall of 1923. In December, they were married.

The relationship was a lifeline to Luce, despite their differences. Lila loved small talk and gossip; Harry was no good at these things. But he, like her, loved accumulating possessions, and he was still drawn to the worldview of the very rich: their sense of entitlement and superiority to the common herd, their contempt (especially among their men) for sentimentality toward the poor. Still Luce could not entirely escape his Protestant past. His sister Emmavil sensed his embrace of wealth and status, and rebuked him for it. And Luce may have rebuked himself, at least inwardly.

But in the 1920s, earnestness was out of fashion: a cynical pose was de rigueur among affluent young blades. Luce softened his missionary impulse and let Hadden lead the way. In an atmosphere dominated by H. L. Mencken, the Menckenesque Hadden directed the editorial policies of the magazine while Luce handled the business side. Hadden was largely responsible for *Time*’s style—a rash of inversions, hyphenations, portmanteau words (“eccentrician”), banal truisms, pedantry, and neologisms. Sometimes, as Brinkley notes, this linguistic mishmash might actually work, “drawing readers into subjects they might otherwise have overlooked, and making people and events more vivid than a conventional story could have done.” This was the sort of accomplishment that melded the magazine’s financial needs with Luce’s didactic heritage—the successful packaging of news for a busy managerial class.

But the seamless merging of news and opinion also raised difficult issues, which Brinkley does not address directly. Most involved the vexed question of objectivity. Luce (and Hadden) defined it as impartiality, and disdained it as unattainable and undesirable. The quest for objectivity was what made serious newspapers so boring: there was no voice, no point of view. *Time*, by contrast, would never try to hide its point of view. The problem was that *Time* was also claiming to present a comprehensive (if abbreviated) version of the news—a factual account of world events. The editors' opinions never announced themselves as such, but rather served to shape the presentation of the facts. Without embracing a naïve "view from nowhere," one can still feel the beginnings of a slippery slope here. As Vanderlan points out in *Intellectuals Incorporated*, *Time*'s melding of opinion and reporting created a "hidden structure for managing the news" that readers often did not recognize. The deeper difficulty was not disdain for impartiality but the disregard of a broader, more defensible definition of objectivity: honesty to the evidence.

Yet *Time*'s willingness to distort or ignore inconvenient evidence did not surface clearly until Luce had been at the editorial helm on his own for some time. During the late 1920s, the volatile Hadden was still running the show, but he was behaving erratically, disappearing for days at a time on benders. He seemed determined to drink himself to death. When he died of an infection in 1929, Luce lost a friend but found a portal of possibility. As Brinkley says, he became the "proud imperious leader" of an emergent publishing empire, with full editorial control. The tone of flippant cynicism began to disappear from the magazine.

IV.

MEANWHILE LUCE was expanding his range. For years he had been dissatisfied with the American business press. It was little more than high-priced boosterism, he believed. Big business was too powerful to be left unexamined, and the separation between ownership and management in the modern corporation meant that managers could play multiple roles in society, and become public figures—even public servants—in a way that the robber barons of old had never been. So in 1930 Luce founded *Fortune*, based on a capacious vision of corporate social responsibility, according to which business leaders had an obligation to the larger society as well as to their stockholders—or (as is more

common these days) merely to themselves. That was the kind of Republican he was. *Autre temps, autre mœurs*.

The collapse of capitalism in the early 1930s gave *Fortune* ample opportunity to promote critical reflection among the managerial class. The magazine was beautiful, expensive, and (sometimes) intellectually challenging. Unlike *Time*, it made no attempt to ensure stylistic homogeneity. To be sure, many of the articles were merely celebrations of corporate modernity: the verbal accompaniment to Margaret Bourke-White's photographs, which presented sanitized factories and other monuments of the machine age, devoid of dirt or people. An early piece on the Swift Meatpacking Company, for example, demonstrated that Upton Sinclair's jungle had become a model of clean, smooth efficiency. But as the Depression deepened and the New Deal dawned, the magazine became more interesting.

Luce hired Ralph Ingersoll away from *The New Yorker* to become associate and later managing editor, and Ingersoll attracted literary talent, promising MacLeish, Macdonald, and other writers more autonomy and more money than they would likely see anywhere else anytime soon. Before long, the magazine was publishing such fare as Eric Hodgins's "Arms and the Men," an exposé of European arms manufacturers that led to the Nye Committee's inquiry into munitions makers' role in World War I; Archibald MacLeish's "Jews in America," which explored the common virus animating Nazi atrocities and American anti-Semitism; and even a sympathetic (if skeptical) account of the American Communist Party by Dwight Macdonald.

Fortune celebrated enlightened capitalists and deplored those who were not maintaining decent labor conditions. The magazine's "crusading point," Luce later recalled, was this: "God damn you, Mrs. Richbitch, we won't have you chattering archly and snobbishly about Bethlehem Common [stock] unless you damn well have a look at the open hearths and slag piles—yes, and the workers' houses of Bethlehem, Pa." The insistence that the comfortable should "damn well have a look" at the workingman's life recalled the Progressive muckrakers' faith in the importance of making poverty visible, but the reference to "Mrs. Richbitch" was more suggestive. One can only speculate what gender conflicts lay behind it: Luce and his family had depended on a number of "Richbitches," and Luce in particular on Nettie McCormick. But she had left him out of her will (to his bitter dis-

appointment), and besides he no longer needed her kind. He was a big man.

After 1936, *Fortune* began to steer rightward. Macdonald, Agee, and eventually MacLeish departed, partly in disgust over Luce's refusal to back the Spanish Loyalists. Meanwhile Luce decided that he needed to consolidate the support of his business audience. As Brinkley observes, *Fortune* became the tribune of an emerging "corporate liberalism," expounded in Luce's "Business Roundtable" column. To exorcise the collectivist specter, he argued, business leaders must reform private enterprise from within. Yet he also urged public spending "to counterbalance the business cycle." Keynesianism was beginning to seem the alternative to collectivism. Compared to laissez-faire dogma, this was indeed enlightened capitalism—and prescient, as it was only the deficit financing of the war that would bring an end to the Depression.

THE 1930S were a time of upheaval in Luce's private life as well. His marriage to Lila had settled into an agreeable but unexciting routine. In December 1934 they were invited to a "Turkish ball" at the Waldorf-Astoria, and there Luce fell into a prolonged, animated conversation with Clare Boothe Brokaw. She was blonde, glamorous, and rich. She was also ambitious, one of the few women who had achieved prominence in publishing at that time. Since her divorce from a polo-playing airhead, she had been managing editor of *Vanity Fair* and had become an aspiring playwright. An hour or two into their encounter Luce was in love again, for the first time since his courtship of Lila. According to Clare, who was not above embellishment, on that first night Luce told her: "I've read about it happening. But it has just happened to me. The French call it a *coup de foudre*. I think I must tell you—you are the one woman in my life." Within a year, Lila agreed to a divorce.

On November 21, 1935, Clare's first play opened on Broadway, to the universal catcalls of critics; two days later she and Luce were married. This was not, as Brinkley observes, a propitious combination of events. The relationship was difficult from the start. Henry and Clare Booth Luce were two ambitious, self-absorbed people who competed constantly with each other. For whatever reason, Henry found himself experiencing periodic and prolonged bouts of impotence with Clare. Mutually frustrated and annoyed with each other, they soon found excuses to stay apart. Clare had many affairs, Henry a few sustained ones (appar-

ently unafflicted by impotence). But they remained formally married, maintaining outwardly cordial relations, meeting each other's public needs. Clare brought Henry into the limelight of celebrity; Henry gave Clare cultural legitimacy and proximity to power.

Amid all his emotional turmoil, Luce was starting what Brinkley calls "a magazine for everyone." Luce's prospectus for *Life*, in June 1936, outlined its aims: "To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things . . . to see things thousands of miles away . . . things dangerous to come to; the women that men love and many children; to see and to take pleasure in the seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed. Thus to see, and to be shown, is now the will and new expectancy of half mankind." This was the sort of inflated faux-populist idiom that advertising copywriters were increasingly employing in the 1930s: it could have been lifted from the pages of the J. Walter Thompson Company playbook. Yet it was not entirely reducible to ad talk. The ambiguity of the phrase "to be shown" was suggestive: most people were watching the spectacle, but others were part of the spectacle themselves.

This was the dialectic of display that would come to dominate celebrity culture. The audience was not merely gaping at the spectacle (as Dwight Macdonald and other critics of mass entertainment would later charge), but actively putting themselves into the picture, imagining that they too could be famous, however briefly. Before the notion of universal momentary fame became a cliché, it filled the pages of *Life* with paunchy men presiding over backyard barbecues in Bermuda shorts and polio victims surviving gamely in "iron lungs." Celebrity culture did not simply arise from the orphic utterances of Andy Warhol; it also stemmed from the fertile brain of Henry Luce.

Yet Luce was emphatically not a post-modernist *avant la lettre*. While he often succumbed to the shallowness of the spectacle that he created, he always aspired to be more than just another clever vendor of shiny surfaces. Unlike his contemporaries in advertising, Luce was not just trying to please a client or move a product: he was trying to shape the worldview of a nation. He really did want *Life* to amaze and instruct the American masses.

The medium that he chose, at a fine modernist moment, was photography: intrepid photographers on Anzio Beach or on top of the Chrysler Building, cre-

ating an apparently transparent record of life. For Luce, the modernist devotion to "straight photography" (clean lines, no tricks) may have resonated with the old Protestant dream of perfect sincerity and social transparency. Of course, even in *Life*, Luce could not resist the didactic possibilities of the printed word: the magazine published many serious ruminations, including his own "American Century." But what really drew *Life*'s huge audience were the extraordinary pictures. Where else could one see Roosevelt and Stalin cheek by jowl with Betty Grable's million-dollar legs, the step-by-step delivery of a newborn baby, and dead soldiers on the beach at Papua New Guinea? Like the Hollywood movies of the era, *Life* created a visual vocabulary that enveloped an entire nation at a historical moment—the Great Depression and World War II—when Americans were beset by longings for security but also by the desire (as Luce's ad copy argued) to *see*.

THE MAGAZINE WAS a smash hit from the beginning. The first issue, with Bourke-White's monumental Fort Peck dam on the cover and a "portrait of a New Deal frontier town" to accompany it inside, created more demand than Luce could profitably supply. But that was the kind of risk Luce was used to taking. "Never in our history," a colleague reminded him, "have we come out of any tight spot by a choice of conservatism or economy in the usual sense of those words; but always expenditure of more money and more effort to gain greater income at greater expense." That was the Luce business model, and it worked—partly because he had such a perceptive sense of what a particular audience wanted at a particular historical moment.

In the case of *Life*, the audience was nothing less than the broad American middle class, emerging out of the Depression, through war, into a suburban civilization. Luce had picked precisely the right time to found a magazine that would chronicle as well as create the mid-century American consensus, with a breadth and intensity that no other magazine could match. However bitterly divided Americans may have been in their everyday lives, in Luce's *Life* they were one nation. So it was appropriate that *Life* became the venue for Luce's 1941 essay, "The American Century," an exceptionalist sermon outlining the nation's God-given duty to remake the world in its image. This vision obsessed Luce for much of the rest of his life.

Throughout the 1930s Luce paid increasing attention to foreign affairs, but moved only haltingly toward the unfettered interventionism of "The American Century." His missionary perspective on Asia led his magazines to sentimentalize China as a force for progress against Japanese barbarism; his default-setting capitalism shaped their representations of the Soviet Union as a mystery beyond the pale of civilization. But the Luce empire was not all of a piece. The leftist writers at *Fortune* were counterbalanced at *Time* by the powerful influence of Laird Goldsborough, a crypto-fascist who swooned over Mussolini and shrugged off Hitler. *Time* called the Nuremberg rallies "the greatest show and heartiest picnic on earth" and applauded the settlement at Munich. Yet *The March of Time*, the movie newsreel that Luce launched in the late 1930s, presented Nazi Germany as a menace to the world. Not everyone was reading the same memos.

Still, *Life* left no doubt where Luce's thought was tending. In June 1939, the magazine published Walter Lippmann's "The American Destiny"—a rallying cry to empire. "What Rome was to the ancient world, what Great Britain has been to the modern world, America is to be to the world of tomorrow," Lippmann wrote. "When the destiny of a nation is revealed to it, there is no choice but to accept that destiny, and to make ready in order to be equal to it." This mystical nationalism was entirely out of character for Lippmann, and he would decisively repudiate it in his later writings. But for Luce it became the emotional core of his worldview.

Luce had been on record as an interventionist since his Wilsonian Class Day oration of 1920. But the grim news from Europe crystallized his belief that America must lead the world. One can hardly fault his sense of alarm. It was February 1941: Hitler had signed a non-aggression pact with Stalin in August 1939, then overrun continental Europe; his disastrous invasion of the Soviet Union was still months away. Dictators held half the globe, from Paris to Vladivostok. The problem, in "The American Century," was not Luce's urgency but his grandiosity. The "cure" for Americans' failure "to play their part as a world power," he wrote, was "to accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world and in consequence to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit." This would involve ensuring that the "free-enterprise system" prevailed internation-

ally, sending American technicians and artists of all kinds out into the world to inspire and educate its people, feeding the world's hungry millions, and spreading "American ideals... a love of freedom, a feeling for the equality of opportunity, a tradition of self-reliance and independence and also of co-operation."

These were fine sentiments, but they involved giving a blank check to American power abroad. This may have been a good wartime strategy, but for the postwar world it was more problematic. And Luce was not alone in the extravagance of his vision. Vice President Henry Wallace presented a softer leftish response to "The American Century" in the speech that became known as "The Century of the Common Man." Wallace was less imperial in his tone, but he still assumed that it was America's duty to spread democracy everywhere. Luce and Wallace were "unwitting partners," Brinkley observes, in launching "an idea that could not accurately be described as imperialism," but that did put the United States on the high road to dominating the postwar world, endowed with a missionary purpose.

Whether this was the road to empire depended on one's point of view. Americans did not occupy land and claim possession of it, as European imperialists had done. Instead they sought access to foreign markets, resources, and investment opportunities by installing client states and propping up pliable regimes. This was the classic strategy of the "Open Door Policy," dating back to the turn of the century; but Luce was inflating it into the same kind of universal, endless mission that his father had undertaken decades before. And like his clerical predecessors, Luce was convinced that Americans' "sincerity and good will" would be enough to ensure that their "leadership... will be eagerly welcomed" by grateful natives of backward lands. This, of course, is another cinematic image—the durable fantasy of American soldiers distributing candy to adorable brown children in exotic places, a fantasy that haunts our foreign policy to this day.

For Luce, the word "leadership" described "the mysterious work" of American ideals in "lifting the life of mankind from the life of the beasts to what the psalmist called a little lower than the angels." Luce's religious language obscured the fundamental narcissism of this mission, the possibility that mankind might not want to be uplifted in the American way. One did not have to be an isolationist to respond skeptically to Luce's mission. Reinhold Niebuhr was nothing if

not an interventionist in 1941, but he recoiled from Luce's resurrection of "the new white man's burden." As Niebuhr wrote, Luce "does not show the slightest indication that our salvation can only be worked out in fear and trembling." Niebuhr himself became an apologist for blank-check interventionism after the war—his "fear and trembling" often seemed little more than a rhetorical gesture—but still he recognized that America was threatened as much by its own moral hubris as by any foreign foe. That kind of Protestant insight was beyond Luce's range.

V.

AT FIRST, as Luce wrote in *Time*, "the war came as a great relief, like a reverse earthquake, that in one terrible jerk shook everything disjointed, distorted, askew back into place. Japanese bombs had finally brought national unity to the United States." The war was good to Luce's media empire: it gave *Life's* photographers the chance to create a stunning visual record of armed conflict, and it gave Luce the opportunity—he hoped—to promote the remaking of America, and in turn, of the world. Out of touch with the everyday operations of his magazines, he increasingly sought to assert his centrality to their editorial practice—peppering the editors with advice, seeking to turn the publications into "ideologically reliable vehicles," as Brinkley writes. This became apparent in 1940, when he elevated Whittaker Chambers, the Communist Party hack turned anti-Communist ideologue, to an influential position at *Time*. To the consternation of his colleagues, Chambers repeatedly found ways to twist articles on just about anything into anti-Communist rants.

But what really excited Luce's missionary impulse was the war in Asia. On a visit to China in 1941, he and Clare met with the Nationalist Chinese leader, General Chiang Kai-shek, and with Madame Chiang. For Luce, the wife was as important as the husband. "What instantly convinced me of her greatness was her delivery of the most direct and unrestrained compliment to my wife's beauty I have ever heard," he wrote. After a one-hour conversation, the Americans left "knowing that we had made the acquaintance of two people, a man and a woman, who out of all the millions living, will be remembered for centuries and centuries." That extraordinary statement suggests just how thoroughly Luce had become one with the world of surface sensation that his magazines reflected and sustained. Throughout the 1940s, General

and Madame Chiang would appear repeatedly on the cover of *Time*.

Luce's devotion to the Chinese Nationalists led him to overlook the inadequacy of their army as well as the corruption, incompetence, and stupidity of their governing elite, the Kuomintang. It also led him to muzzle his own reporters, notably Theodore White, a young *Time* correspondent who had studied Chinese history with John Fairbank at Harvard. White shared Luce's love for China, but when he told the truth about Chiang's regime, Luce assigned Chambers to sanitize White's reports, then moved White away from Chinese politics to local color, and finally forced him to quit.

Luce's concern for Nationalist China shaped virtually all his wartime views. In 1942, he wanted to win the war in Asia first; in 1945, he opposed the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings because they ended the war too soon to give the Nationalist Chinese a chance to demonstrate their worth in battle. Whenever Luce visited China, he ignored the growing strength of the Communists and saw "America and the twentieth century" everywhere he looked. His outlook combined willful blindness with hallucination.

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After the Japanese defeat, the Kuomintang shriveled before the advance of the Communists. As Chiang's soldiers surrendered by the thousands, in eerie anticipation of the South Vietnamese army twenty years later, Luce looked the other way, remaining convinced of the Generalissimo's greatness. By 1949, when Chiang fled and the Communists declared victory, Luce had become isolated within his own company. He began consorting with the "Who lost China?" crowd and dipping a toe in the murky waters of their conspiracy theories—particularly the notion that State Department officials had conspired to encourage a sanguine view of the Communists and to undermine American support for the Kuomintang.

LUCE'S RIGIDITY on China betokened a larger shift to the right. He still believed in the American Century, and still wanted to use *Life* to teach Americans how to rule the world—publishing Churchill's memoirs in 1948, Luce thought, was one way to do this. But his intensifying anti-Communism led him toward a more aggressive militarism. He accepted elements of George Kennan's idea of containment but rejected its refusal to roll back Communist advances in Eastern Europe and Asia. In January 1951, as the Korean war threatened to engulf East Asia, Luce waxed "grimly ebullient," in Brinkley's words. A wider war would mean open conflict with Red China and a chance to return the Nationalists to the mainland. It might also mean confrontation with the Soviet Union: at one point Luce imagined "plastering the Russians with 500 (or 1,000) A-bombs." Rebuking the Truman administration for its *realpolitik*, he insisted that "the struggle between Freedom and Communism is at bottom a moral issue ... a religious issue."

Like his fellow Presbyterian John Foster Dulles and others on the right, Luce believed that in a struggle with "prodigious evil" there was no substitute for victory. When General Douglas MacArthur publicly protested Truman's refusal to let him invade China, Truman relieved him of command and the general became a national hero. Luce was among the worshippers. After visiting MacArthur at his New York hotel, Luce confided in a private memorandum that the old soldier "looked healthy ... handsome ... and more vigorous than any public man I know." (One is reminded of the ABC reporter Frank Reynolds's outburst the night of Ronald Reagan's election: "He looks great! He always looks great!") In Luce's media hall of mirrors,

appearance underwrote authority. But Truman, in Luce's view, had tied the vigorous general's hands behind his back.

A Republican administration brought some relief. Luce was welcome at the Eisenhower White House, and Clare was appointed ambassador to Italy, and Dulles was made secretary of state. But the atmosphere of constant Cold War crisis continued. Dulles announced his policy of nuclear brinksmanship in *Life*, and *Time* applauded it. Luce was convinced that "the climactic crisis of the twentieth century" was at hand: the global struggle with Communism. He urged greater American backing for the French in Indochina. In 1953, he placed the photographer David Douglas Duncan on the "inactive list" after Duncan observed in *Life* that the French had already lost the war. Duncan was right, but no matter. Ideology trumped observation in Luce's moral universe.

Gradually, as Cold War tensions temporarily eased in the latter part of the 1950s, Luce began to relax (insofar as he was able) and to take more pleasure in his proximity to power. Clare's post in Rome allowed him regular access to the foreign policy elite. The Italians believed that the couple were on intimate terms with Eisenhower, and Luce was in his element. "He fancies he is molding the destiny of the U.S. in the world," a disgruntled deputy noted.

In fact, he was sinking into a sadness. In 1956 he began a furtive affair with a much younger woman, Jeanne Campbell, the daughter of Lord Beaverbrook. But his halfhearted efforts to obtain a divorce from Clare came to nothing. In spite of their estrangement, they still somehow depended on each other. Jeanne broke things off with Luce a few years later by taking up with Norman Mailer. Luce had lost his last chance for romance. Meanwhile his health was failing. In 1958 he suffered his first heart attack. As he neared sixty, he seemed distracted and depressed, and he looked much older than his years. He had always lacked humor and social grace, but now, a friend said, he seemed "the loneliest man I've ever known."

The last hurrah for Luce's American Century came in his attempt to promote a debate about "The National Purpose." For years he had been concerned that Americans were sinking into a swamp of comfortable complacency, a society where "Nobody Is Mad at Nobody," as *Life* put it in 1955. (This may be hard to imagine in our America of rage and invective.) The Soviet Union's successful launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957

brought other critics around to his view. In 1959, Walter Lippmann observed that the Soviet Union was winning the Cold War because it was a "purposeful society," while the United States was behaving as if its purposes had already been accomplished.

This argument spoke directly to Luce the moralist: it was time, he decided, to rededicate ourselves to our providential mission as a nation. In 1960, he convened a number of prominent Americans—including Adlai Stevenson, Billy Graham, Archibald MacLeish, James Reston, and Walter Lippmann—to write a series of essays for *Life* about how to revive the flagging national purpose. Most tried to embed Luce's lodestar, "freedom," in a more robust communal or social context. None succeeded in producing anything memorable, except for the occasional alliterative phrase: MacLeish complained about the "flatulence and fat of an overfed people." The contributors' only common commitment, in the end, was to the idea of commitment.

Still, the "national purpose" project was well-timed. The candidacy of John F. Kennedy addressed many of the same concerns, with similarly vague results in the realm of rhetoric, and catastrophically specific results in the precincts of policy. Luce was not opposed to Nixon, but he liked Kennedy's dynamism, his zeal for "action" and for "getting the country moving again." He also liked Kennedy's apparent commitment to racial equality. But most of all he liked Kennedy's call for a more flexible and aggressive foreign policy.

As the consequences of this policy began to unfold in Vietnam, *Time's* correspondent Charles Mohr reported that the South Vietnamese army was not holding its own against the Communist insurgency, the Viet Cong. Like Chambers re-writing White's reports from China, *Time's* managing editor Otto Furerbringer transformed Mohr's dark dispatches into optimistic accounts of an emerging joint venture between the United States and South Vietnam. Assigned to report on Madame Ngo Dinh Diem, the wife of the South Vietnamese president's brother, Mohr revealed the powerful Ngo family's corruption, incompetence, and insulation from the Vietnamese people. But what appeared in *Time* was a puff piece announcing that "the bravest woman in South Vietnam ... is Mme. Ngo Dinh Diem."

By this time Luce was far from the daily workings of his magazines and on the verge of retirement. But *Time's* distortions of the news from Vietnam were

consistent with Luce's established editorial policies as well as with his deepest moral commitments—to military confrontation with a Communist enemy that he deemed monolithic and diabolical; to the spread of American values abroad, by force if necessary. He embraced journalistic practices that would slant the news to promote his mission, that would elevate ideology over experience and observation. Whatever his many publishing achievements, when it came to presenting the news, the preacher's son was little more than a propagandist. In an interview with Luce in 1966, a year before he died, the historian Eric Goldman wondered whether the publisher's interventionist sermons had promoted "a kind of modern day American imperialism." We may wonder, too.

It would be tempting, but mistaken, to see Luce as a figure whose time has passed. To be sure, the mass audience that he courted has fragmented into a hundred niche markets, and the patriarchal editorial voice that he cultivated so carefully has been transformed, for good and ill, into a million twitters. But the world of celebrity journalism that Luce helped to create survives and flourishes: surface sensations remain the coin of the realm, and the successful manipulation of appearances is still the path to cultural and political power. The most important continuity is in foreign policy, where Luce's missionary rhetoric has returned to sanctify military adventure and to cloud debate. The big man's ghost still haunts us. Whether we can ever completely exorcise it remains an open question. ♦

It is not surprising that the specifically erotic dimension of "only connect" has been largely lost for today's readers. For if there is one thing that separates us from Forster, it is the transformation in Western sexual mores between 1910, when *Howards End* was published, and 2010. If Forster strikes us as quaint, in a way that his contemporaries Joyce and Woolf do not, it is not simply because of his formal conservatism, but because he shows us, in Frank Kermode's words, "a world in which what may now seem fairly trivial sexual gestures carry a freight of irreversible significance." As Kermode goes on to note in his brief but illuminating new study, "two stolen kisses are sufficient to sustain the plot of *A Room with a View*." That novel appeared in 1908, just fourteen years before Joyce would show Leopold Bloom masturbating on Sandymount Strand. World War I was clearly the dividing line between these sexual epochs, but even though Forster was not yet forty when the war ended, he published only one novel after it, *A Passage to India*. His fiction remains tethered to the Edwardian period, the twilight of the sexual *ancien régime*.

The less explicit Forster is about sex, the more sentimental he becomes, with results that are sometimes quite ludicrous. When Rickie Elliot, in *The Longest Journey*, stumbles upon Gerald and Agnes, an engaged couple, in an embrace, Forster describes the effect on him in terms borrowed from the overture to *Das Rheingold*:

It was a fragment of the Tune of tunes. Nobler instruments accepted it, the clarinet protected, the brass encouraged, and it rose to the surface to the whisper of violins. In full unison was Love born, flame of the flame, flushing the dark river beneath him and the virgin snows above. His wings were infinite, his youth eternal; the sun was a jewel on his finger as he passed it in benediction over the world. Creation, no longer monotonous, acclaimed him, in widening melody, in brighter radiance. Was Love a column of fire? Was he a torrent of song? Was he greater than either—the touch of a man on a woman?

Biography may have little to tell us about why a novelist writes well, but it can sometimes be helpful in understanding why a novelist writes badly. So it is not insignificant, in reading such a purple passage, to learn that at the time he wrote it—in his mid-twenties—Forster actually did not know how men and women had

Adam Kirsch THE PROSE AND THE PASSION

A GREAT UNRECORDED HISTORY:

A NEW LIFE OF E. M. FORSTER

By Wendy Moffat

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 404 pp., \$32.50)

CONCERNING E. M. FORSTER

By Frank Kermode

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 180 pp., \$24)

WHenever E. M. Forster is discussed, the phrase "only connect" is sure to come up sooner or later. The epigraph to *Howards*

End, the book he described with typical modesty as "my best novel and approaching a good novel," seems to capture the leading idea of all his work—the moral importance of connection between individuals, across the barriers of race, class, and nation. What is not as frequently remembered is that, when Forster uses the phrase in *Howards End*, he is not actually talking about this kind of social connection, but about something more elusive and private—the difficulty of connecting our ordinary, conventional personalities with our transgressive erotic desires.

"Only connect" makes its entrance shortly after Margaret Schlegel, the novel's liberal intellectual heroine, is first kissed by Henry Wilcox, the conservative businessman whom she has rather surprisingly agreed to marry. Passion has played little part in their relationship, and though they have gotten engaged

they have not yet touched. When Wilcox suddenly embraces her, then, Margaret "was startled and nearly screamed," and though she tries to kiss "with genuine love the lips that were pressed against her own," she feels afterwards that "on looking back, the incident displeased her. It was so isolated. Nothing in their previous conversation had heralded it, and, worse still, no tenderness had ensued ... he had hurried away as if ashamed." A few pages later, Margaret's reflections on this erotic incompetence lead, as often happens in Forster's fiction, into an authorial homily:

Outwardly [Henry Wilcox] was cheerful, reliable, and brave; but within, all had reverted to chaos, ruled, so far as it was ruled at all, by an incomplete asceticism. Whether as boy, husband, or widower, he had always the sneaking belief that bodily passion is bad ... And it was here that Margaret hoped to help him.

It did not seem so difficult. She need trouble him with no gift of her own. She would only point out the salvation that was latent in his own soul, and in the soul of every man. Only connect! That was her whole sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.

sexual intercourse. This is hard to credit, but Forster himself said so. In her new biography of Forster, Wendy Moffat quotes from what he called his “Sex Diary,” now in the library of King’s College, Cambridge, where the novelist reviewed the landmarks in his sexual development from childhood on. He recorded that as a boy he “learnt that there was queer stuff in Bible [sic], and thought that ‘lying together’ meant that a man placed his stomach against a woman’s and that it was a crisis when he warmed her—perhaps that a child was born, but of this I cannot be sure.... Never connected warming operation with my sexual premonitions. This chance guess, that came so near to the truth, never developed and *not till I was 30* did I know exactly how male and female joined.”

Forster turned thirty in 1909, the year he began writing *Howards End*. Yet the emphasis on sexual sincerity in that book is only a development of a theme that had been present in his fiction since his first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, which was published in 1905. In each of his first four books, Forster writes as a defender of sexual freedom and self-knowledge against the suffocating ignorance of conventional morality. Kermode writes that his fiction is almost “evangelical” in its obsession with “the choice to be made between winning salvation and backsliding,” and notes that critics often relate this quality to Forster’s descent from the Clapham Sect—a group of rich London evangelicals who were prominent in the early nineteenth-century campaign to abolish slavery.

Forster preserves his ancestors’ concern with salvation, but he reverses their definition of it. In his fiction, Christianity is always a force for damnation, because it keeps people mired in sexual hypocrisy. (One of the reasons given for Henry Wilcox’s failure to “connect” is that “the words that were read aloud on Sunday to him and to other respectable men were the words that had once kindled the souls of St. Catharine and St. Francis into a white-hot hatred of the carnal”) Salvation means having the courage to be what one is, sexually speaking—to listen to the still small voice of attraction, which for Forster is not just a matter of appetite but of conscience. So, in *A Room with a View*, when Lucy Honeychurch breaks her engagement to Cecil Vyse in order to marry George Emerson, the man to whom she is attracted, she is not simply doing what she likes. Rather, she is heeding the moral imperative voiced by George’s father:

“Yes, for we fight for more than Love or Pleasure; there is Truth. Truth counts, Truth does count.”

Forster speaks in the voice of Bunyan’s Valiant-for-Truth, and the truth he preaches is that of the body: “love is of the body; not the body, but of the body. Ah! the misery that would be saved if we confessed that! Ah! for a little directness to liberate the soul!” The problem, reading Forster today, is that we are no longer much in need of this kind of valor. Over the last hundred years, the primacy of the body and of sexual desire became an article



of psychological, medical, and commercial faith. We have not entered paradise as a result—sexual abundance and familiarity have their discontents, though reading Forster convinces us that these are not to be compared with the discontents of scarcity and ignorance. But the sexual problems of our time are nearly as far from those of Forster’s as from those of Jane Austen’s. Indeed, precisely because Forster does begin to address sex openly, as Austen never does, he can seem the more dated of the two. It may be that Samuel Butler’s bold novelistic call for religious liberation, *The Way of All Flesh* (which was published posthumously in 1903, just two years before Forster’s debut), speaks more directly to readers today than do Forster’s comparatively timid calls for sexual liberation.

BUT WHAT IF the kind of sexual freedom that Forster championed, in these early novels, is not really what he cared about at all? That is the thesis of Moffat’s book, which can be read as an attempt to renew Forster’s pertinence by recasting him as a fighter in a different liberation struggle, one that has not yet won complete success. This is the fight for gay liberation, and the unrecorded history Moffat alludes to in her title is the history of Forster’s homosexuality. In her preface she quotes Christopher Isherwood, shortly after Forster’s death in 1970, saying that “all those books [about Forster] have got to be re-written. Unless you start with the fact that he was homosexual, nothing’s any good at all.”

But that was forty years ago. It has been a long time since Forster’s gayness was a secret. To his intimates, it never was: starting in the 1920s, Moffat shows, Forster was part of a thriving gay community, with friends and correspondents across England and America. From 1930 onwards he was in a devoted relationship

with Bob Buckingham, a married policeman, and it seems that most people who knew Forster well enough to call him Morgan also knew Bob. Yet it is true that Forster never “came out” in the modern sense, and people who knew him only as a writer or public figure did not necessarily know he was gay. Only friends who had been welcomed into Forster’s full confidence were allowed to read the manuscript of *Maurice*, his only novel about homosexuality, which he finished in 1914 but never published. In 1933 Forster allowed the young Isherwood to read it as he sat by his side, and Moffat writes that “the moment cemented the friendship for life.”

Moffat implies that she is breaking the public silence about Forster’s sexuality. “All his long life Morgan lived in a world imprisoned by prejudice against homosexuals,” she writes. “Almost a century ago, Forster dedicated *Maurice* to ‘a happier year.’ Perhaps that time is now.” But *Maurice* was published in 1971, the year after Forster died, in accordance with his instructions; and in 1987 it was made into a movie, a clear sign that its subject matter had ceased to be taboo. The key episodes in Forster’s sexual life, as Moffat relates them in this book, were all disclosed in P.N. Furbank’s authorized *E.M. Forster: A Life*, in 1977. It was Furbank who revealed that Forster did not know “the facts of life” until he was thirty; that his first sexual experience came in October 1916, when he was thirty-seven, with a soldier in Alexandria, where he was doing war service at a British army hospital; that his first love was Mohammed El Adl, an Egyptian train conductor whom he met soon after; and that the love of his life was Bob Buckingham.

So Moffat’s “new life of E.M. Forster” is not exactly a revelation—though she does quote directly from sources, including the “Sex Diary,” that Furbank paraphrased. It is, rather, a re-interpretation, designed to draw the reader’s attention to Forster’s gayness and his gay legacy. Moffat is driven by a great personal fondness for Forster—she calls him Morgan throughout, as though insisting on retroactive intimacy, and puts herself on equally close terms with other figures in the story. (“Ben was slighter than the imposing Peter,” she remarks about Britten and Pears.) On the book’s last page, Moffat states her claim in still stronger terms: “copying out the relevant scraps [of Forster’s notebooks] by hand ... engenders a trance, a feeling of automatic writing, a fleeting fantasy of complete connection with Morgan’s remarkable mind and heart.”

ANTHONY RUSSO

Moffat's possessiveness is colored by a strong moral earnestness, which leads her to want to make reparation to the novelist for all the repression and unhappiness that he suffered in his lifetime. This laudable impulse comes across, for instance, in the way Moffat adds an approving adjective to every sexual experience of Forster's she has occasion to mention. So, when Forster visits New York and goes cruising in Central Park, Moffat writes that it was "a glorious night of casual sex," and at another moment notes that Forster liked to "discover or arrange sexy flings on trips abroad." Was the sex really glorious that night? Were the flings always satisfyingly sexy? There does not seem to be any evidence on such questions, and the reader is left feeling that Moffat so much wants Forster to have enjoyed himself that she simply asserts that he did.

This tendency becomes more problematic when Moffat interprets away the genuine ambiguity, and occasional darkness, that Forster himself acknowledged in some of his sexual feelings and relationships. In 1921, Forster spent several months in India working as secretary to Babu Sahib, the ruler of a minor Hindu principality. One of the perquisites of his job was a sex slave, a boy named Kanaya, and Forster recorded how his total power over Kanaya corrupted him:

I resumed sexual intercourse with him, but it was now mixed with the desire to inflict pain. It didn't hurt him to speak of, but it was bad for me, and new in me ... I've never had that desire with anyone else, before or after, and I wasn't trying to punish him—I knew his silly little soul was incurable. I just felt he was a slave, without rights, and I a despot whom no one could call to account.

Yet Moffat, even as she cites this passage, hastens to palliate it: "On the other hand, it seemed grotesque to Morgan to deny consciousness or agency to Kanaya ... just because [he wasn't] white. In the murky world of English-colonial relations wasn't skepticism that a brown man could feel affection for him simply a different sort of bigotry?" Finally, Moffat writes, "Morgan concluded that he was ill-equipped to interpret the sexual lexicon of this strange world." But there is no quotation to illustrate these anachronistic-sounding doubts about "consciousness or agency," and one is left feeling that Moffat's relativism is just a way of making Forster sound more admirable than he was or knew himself to be.

A similar thing happens when Forster confesses that living in Egypt, as a rep-

resentative of the ruling race, bred racist habits of mind. "I came inclined to be pleased and quite free from racial prejudice," he wrote, "but in 10 months I've acquired an instinctive dislike to the Arab voice, the Arab figure, the Arab way of looking or walking or pump shitting or eating or laughing or anything—exactly the emotion that I censured in the Anglo-Indian towards the native. ... It's damnable and disgraceful, and it's in me." It could not be clearer that Forster, with typical honesty, is using himself as a case study for the very evil he was to analyze in *A Passage to India*—the way that racial privilege corrupts, even if the man who enjoys it means well.

In the novel, Forster shows this process at work in Ronny Heaslop, the English magistrate in the Indian city of Chandrapore. When Ronny's fiancée, Adela Quested, decides to break their engagement, Forster emphasizes that Ronny behaves admirably, humanely: "How decent he was! He might force his opinions down her throat, but did not press her to an 'engagement,' because he believed, like herself, in the sanctity of personal relationships." Yet the whole novel is a demonstration of how the British Raj, with its racialized hierarchy, makes personal relationships impossible; and Ronny is shown to treat the Indian Dr. Aziz, a cultivated and kindly man, with brutal contempt. Goodness in one compartment of life can coexist with violence and cruelty in another—a lesson that makes *A Passage to India* prophetic of the complexity of the twentieth century's many evildoers.

Yet Moffat does not want Forster to incriminate himself even to this extent. What he calls racist disgust toward Arabs, she insists, was really just suppressed sexual desire: "Far from instinctive, Morgan's reaction came from careful, painful observation of these Arab men ... watching them laugh and be separate from him inflamed his desire, and his self-loathing. ... He hated what he did not have the courage to touch." Well, maybe—but that is not what Forster said, and not what he believed was important. He was able to sustain the difficult truth that being a victim of injustice, as a homosexual, did not make it impossible for him to practice injustice, as a white man in Egypt and India.

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION, of course, is how Forster's sexuality, and his struggles with it and with society on account of it, should affect the way we read his work. One way of coming to grips with this question is to address the place of *Maurice* in Forster's

oeuvre. For Kermode, this is not hard to do: he simply dismisses it as a bad book, beginning a discussion of Forster's fiction with the words, "Leaving aside the posthumously published and inferior *Maurice*..." Conversely, to Moffat, who has almost nothing to say about Forster's writing as literature, *Maurice* is absolutely central, because it is "his only truly honest novel"—that is, the only one from which the reader can easily deduce that the author is homosexual.

This is all-important, Moffat says, because Forster was "certain that his homosexuality was the central fact of his being." This is reductive, but there is no need to quarrel with it too much. There can be no doubt that Forster's sexuality was essential to his experience of life—everyone's is. But that is exactly the problem: everyone is sexual, and everyone is different, and so it is impossible to deduce anything very profound about any particular person from the bald fact of his or her sexual orientation. Nor is it possible to deduce very much about any gay writer from the fact that he is gay. Consider that Forster belonged to the same generation as Proust, whom he admired very much, and Mann, whom he seems not to have read at all. (One of Kermode's complaints is that in *Aspects of the Novel* Forster had "remarkably little to say" about his great contemporaries.) Both of these writers wrote much more explicitly about homosexuality than Forster did, although Mann concealed his homoerotic desires under his image as a bourgeois paterfamilias, and Proust turned his male lovers into women when he put them into his novel.

Forster never adopted this strategy, in part because, at the time he wrote his first five novels, he had not had any lovers. But there was also a principle at stake, as he wrote in his diary: "N.B. I have never tried to turn a man into a girl, as Proust did with Albertine, for this seemed derogatory to me as a writer." So Forster himself shared Moffat's sense that it was not

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“truly honest” for a gay writer to write in a way that could lead the reader to believe he was not gay. This did not mean, apparently, that he should not write about heterosexual characters and relationships—even *A Passage to India*, the only novel Forster wrote after *Maurice*, revolves around the potential marriage of Ronny and Adela. But it did mean that Forster became uncomfortable with strained rhapsodies about “the touch of a man on a woman.” As he grew older, he complained more than once that the impossibility of treating gay love openly in a novel had made novel-writing itself unappealing to him. After *Howards End*, he wrote of his “weariness of the only subject that I can and may treat—the love of men for women and vice versa.” Near the end of his life, he reflected, “I want to love a strong young man of the lower classes and be loved by him and even hurt by him. That is my ticket, and then I have wanted to write respectable novels. No wonder they have worked out rather queer.”

There is something “queer,” in both Forster’s sense and the contemporary sense, about Forster’s “respectable” novels. At times he said that *The Longest Journey*, his second book, was the one that gave him the most pleasure to have written, “a book to my own heart. I should have thought it impossible for a writer to look back and find his works so warm and beautiful.” Few readers have shared this judgment—it is probably the least read of Forster’s novels. But his affection for it is understandable if it is read as his first, half-conscious attempt to write about homosexuality.

The story of Rickie Elliot’s moral education, like that of Lucy Honeychurch, drives home the lesson that each person must listen to his actual desires, even at the price of violating convention. But while Lucy’s trial of conscience involves choosing one man over another as a husband, Rickie’s is a matter of learning to despise the institution of marriage itself, and to vindicate his natural preference for intimacy with men. The dedication Forster chose for the novel is *Fratribus*—“to the brothers”—and the man Rickie finally chooses above his cold, conventional wife is his half-brother, Stephen Wonham. But the passions and intensities of the novel only really make sense if Rickie’s attraction to men is sexual, and at moments Forster seems to say as much—so explicitly that it is surprising neither he nor his readers apparently noticed this subtext:

He was thinking of the irony of friendship—so strong it is, and so fragile. We

fly together, like straws in an eddy, to part in the open stream. Nature has no use for us: she has cut her stuff differently. Dutiful sons, loving husbands, responsible fathers—these are what she wants, and if we are friends it must be in our spare time. Abram and Sarai were sorrowful, yet their seed became as sand of the sea, and distracts the politics of Europe at this moment. But a few verses of poetry is all that survives of David and Jonathan.

Rickie goes on to wish that “there was a society, a kind of friendship office, where the marriage of true minds could be registered”—as close to a call for gay marriage as one might find in a novel published in 1907.

FOR MOFFAT’S interpretation of Forster’s life to cohere, *Maurice* ought to be his masterpiece. After writing four “dishonest” novels, in 1913–1914 he finally wrote one that was “truly honest”: the story of Maurice Hall, a rather dull-witted son of the English bourgeoisie who learns to embrace his homosexuality, despite many social and emotional ordeals. Yet *Maurice* is actually, as Kermode says, Forster’s slightest novel—and it is not too much to say that it is his slightest artistically because it is his most admirable ethically. In writing it, Forster had a clear moral and political idea in mind: “To give these people a chance—to see ... whether their convictions of Sin are really more than the burrs in the social fabric that the heart and brain, working together, can pluck out—that’s why I wrote *Maurice*.” For the same reason, he wrote in a “terminal note” to the manuscript, “A happy ending was imperative. I shouldn’t have bothered to write otherwise. I was determined that in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows.” And so Maurice is rewarded with the love of Alec Scudder, the gruff, handsome gamekeeper, who tells him, “And now we shan’t be parted no more, and that’s finished.”

Yet this determination to vindicate in art the injustices of life paralyzed the very qualities that we think of as most Forsterian: the relaxed irony of his plotting, the urbanity of his moralizing, the lyricism of his prose. Compare the moral balance of *Howards End*, where the reader’s sympathies are suspended between Schlegel and Wilcox until the very end, with *Maurice*’s uninflected indignation against “the middle-middle classes, whose highest desire seemed shelter—continuous shelter ... shelter everywhere and always, until the existence of earth

and sky is forgotten, shelter from poverty and disease and violence and impoliteness; and consequently from joy; God slipped this retribution in.”

At the time Forster wrote *Maurice*, these were things that he urgently needed to say and that the world needed to hear. Of course, the world did not hear them—Forster said that the novel was “unpublishable until my death and England’s,” and until very close to his death he was right. Gide could write openly about his homosexuality in *Corydon*, in 1924, and Mann could publish *Death in Venice* in 1912, the year before Forster started *Maurice*; but France and even Germany were not England. Moffat reminds the reader that, as late as 1952, the great mathematician Alan Turing was sentenced to chemical castration after being found guilty of the crime of homosexuality, and committed suicide as a result. Forster lamented this extreme intolerance in *Maurice* itself: when Maurice finds that even a course of hypnotism cannot “cure” him, his doctor advises him “to live in some country that has adopted the Code Napoleon ... France or Italy, for instance. There homosexuality is no longer criminal.”

In 1914, *Maurice* really was a brave assault on respectability. (When Forster had sex with a man for the first time, the code phrase he used in a letter to a friend was “parting with respectability.”) But sexual mores have changed so dramatically and so quickly that today, while prejudice against gays has certainly not disappeared, that very prejudice is what is not respectable. A book such as *A Great Unrecorded History*, certainly, is unlikely to find many readers who would disagree with its premise that gay liberation is an unqualified good, or who would even find that idea controversial.

The great irony of *Maurice*, then, is that it consummates the sexual critique that animated all Forster’s earlier novels, and in doing so sets the seal on that critique’s obsolescence. In a world where sexuality was imprisoned by convention, Forster’s earnest attack on convention—including its extreme forms, repression and taboo—was liberating, as can be seen from the intense devotion he won from readers, especially gay readers, around the world. Moffat quotes the letter that the American painter Paul Cadmus wrote Forster after reading his essay “What I Believe”: “‘What I Believe’ is so much what I believe too that I always read it to potential friends.... I am afraid I [am] not able to live up to it, nor to you.” Isherwood declared, “My England is E.M.; the anti-heroic hero, with his straggly straw

mustache, his light, gay, baby blue eyes and his elderly stoop.”

DOES FORSTER HAVE the same power to inspire today? Kermode, for one, takes a much drier view of “What I Believe,” which he dissects in one of the best passages of his book. Forster’s essay, collected in *Two Cheers for Democracy*, was written in 1939, and it is a defense of his vision of liberalism in an age of ideological total war, which he calls “an Age of Faith—the sort of epoch I used to hear praised when I was a boy.” In the face of huge warring collectivities like nation and class, Forster declares his belief in “personal relationships,” the only thing “comparatively solid in a world full of violence and cruelty.” He reiterates, in a dark moment, vital liberal truths: that the state exists for the individual, not vice versa; that love and loyalty are owed to individuals before abstractions; that tolerance and free speech are essential for human flourishing.

Yet there is something unsatisfactory about “What I Believe,” as Kermode suggests when he observes that “the ideal citizens of a Forsterian republic would not easily be recognized as democrats.” The problem is that, in elevating friendship over politics—this is the essay in which he famously writes that “if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country”—Forster is actually trying to make friendship the basis of a politics. And the result can only be a kind of aristocracy, as Forster affirms: “I believe in aristocracy.... Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet.”

But to associate the liberal virtues, as Forster does here, with aristocracy and the private life is to cede democracy and the public life to the opponents of liberalism. It is to condemn liberalism to a bad conscience—Forster describes the essay as “the reflections of an individualist and a liberal, who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him and at first felt ashamed.” It relegates liberalism to the status of an underground movement, whose members recognize each other through “secret” signs that are too dangerous to avow—a little like the French Resistance, which did form a kind of moral aristocracy in the midst of a defeated, demoralized society. And this is perhaps the source of the problem with “What I Be-

lieve”: in 1939, Forster is writing as though English liberalism were already defeated, as though he were addressing an occupied country. According to Furbank, “the outbreak of war in September 1939 left him calm though pessimistic, convinced that Britain would be defeated.”

The same pessimism afflicted Forster when he came to consider the future of the novel. Moffat argues, with support from Forster himself, that the reason he stopped writing fiction was his impatience with heterosexual romance as a subject. But Forster also gave other reasons—above all, his sense that the novel was intimately connected with a social order that was doomed in Europe. Speaking to the Communist-organized International Congress of Writers, held in Paris in 1935, Forster took a certain pained satisfaction in confessing to his own obsolescence: “They may say that if there is another war writers of the individualistic and liberalizing type, like myself... will be swept away. I am sure that we shall be swept away, and I think... that there may be another war.... This being so, my job... is an interim job. We have just to go on tinkering with our old tools until the crash comes.... After it—if there is an after—the task of civilization will be carried on by people whose training has been different from my own.”

WHY, IN THE 1930S, did Forster make such a limited, dispirited defense of the novel and of liberalism? Was it, at least in part, because he had long resigned himself to making similarly limited claims on behalf of homosexuals, and for himself as a homosexual? He could circulate *Maurice* in private, but not publish it; he could trust friends with the knowledge of his gayness, but he could not make it an element of his public literary identity. Even in *Maurice* itself, the happy ending consists of the lovers running away to “the greenwood,” a Shakespearean zone of imaginary freedom. The idea that they could demand public recognition—say, by setting up house together in London—was beyond literary possibility (though Forster knew a number of established gay couples). Indeed, Forster’s “aristocracy,” whose “members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet,” could with only the slightest alteration be a description of the way gay society functioned in his time—just as, in *The Longest Journey*, his “friendship office” for the “marriage of true minds” reads as a veiled description of gay partnership.

If, as Moffat says, Forster’s “homosexuality was the central fact of his being,” it would make sense that the burdens imposed on his sexuality took a toll on the confidence of his claims on behalf of his politics and his writing. In each of these realms, he clung to freedom as a privilege, rather than demanding it as a right; he spoke of goodness rather than justice. But this would be, once again, to commit the error of making Forster’s sexuality the sole determinant of his being. It is more accurate to reverse the proposition—to say that it was Forster’s being that determined the way he thought about sexuality, no less than politics and literature. Indeed, as Moffat shows, few gay men even in Edwardian England were as cautious, or as romantically naïve, as the young Forster. Lytton Strachey, his fellow Apostle in Cambridge, regarded the conclusion of *Maurice* as absurd: “I should have prophesied a rupture [between Maurice and Alec] after 6 months—chiefly as a result of... class differences,” he told Forster. He also objected to its extremely high-minded treatment of sex, which Forster euphemizes as “sharing”: “I really think the whole conception of male copulation in the book rather diseased—in fact morbid and unnatural.”

IF THERE IS a biographical source for Forster’s bad conscience, his conviction that the civilization he cherished was doomed, it is more likely to lie in his social class than his sexuality. Like the Schlegels in *Howards End*, Forster was a *rentier*, living off a large bequest from his great-aunt. In an age when class tensions were rising and the Liberal Party was giving way to Labour, his feeling of guilt at being economically unproductive, a kind of bourgeois parasite, seems to have contaminated his view of the art he produced—as though literature and civilization, too, were bourgeois luxuries. If individualism and the novel were doomed, it was in the same way that the old country houses were doomed—they would be justly confiscated in the name of a more equitable future.

The passage that brings out this feeling most clearly is one of the most objectionable in all of Forster—the mockery of Leonard Bast’s literary aspirations in *Howards End*. Kermode, who is much more interested in Forster’s class feelings than his sexual feelings, writes that “to a surprising extent one’s attitude to *Howards End* depends... on one’s response to Bast,” and he is angered by Forster’s condescension toward this self-improving clerk, who fatefully crosses paths with the Schlegels at a Beethoven concert.

Forster treats Bast's longing for art and culture as delusional, hopeless; he is "one of the thousands who have lost the life of the body and failed to reach the life of the spirit." Kermode argues that this failure is not so much Bast's as his creator's: "The sordid scene that Forster sets in the Bast home . . . is persuasively wretched. But it makes no provision for other possibilities, for relationships between men and women of this class that were not so hopeless and so wretched." He points out that writers of the eminence of V. S. Pritchett and Edwin Muir started life in circumstances like Bast's, as members of the "office-boy intelligentsia."

This is all true, and Kermode persuasively shows that Forster had his thumb on the scale against Bast—even the character's name is meant to hint at "bastard." But Forster might have fairly responded that most office boys were not Muir or Pritchett, that thousands of men as intellectually thwarted as Bast did exist, and that in any case this story of failure was the story he wanted to tell. Forster's really unforgivable error is not in making Bast a failure, but in saying that the nature of literature itself is opposed to Bast's success. Here is Bast reading a page of Ruskin:

"Let us consider a little each of these characters in succession, and first (for of the shafts enough has been said already), what is very peculiar to this church—its luminousness." Was there anything to be learnt from this fine sentence? Could he adapt it to the needs of daily life? Could he introduce it, with modifications, when he next wrote a letter to his brother, the lay reader? For example—
 "Let us consider a little each of these characters in succession, and first (for of the absence of ventilation enough has been said already), what is very peculiar to this flat—its obscurity." Something told him that the modifications would not do; and that something, had he known it, was the spirit of English Prose. "My flat is dark as well as stuffy." Those were the words for him.

If Forster really believed that "the spirit of English Prose" was against Leonard Bast, then he had no choice but to write with a bad conscience, and to offer at most two cheers for democracy. If literature is against hope, against enlightenment, against the spread of true civilization, then it is indeed a poisoned gift. But there is no basis for such a slander. Think of what the spirit of English prose meant for Dickens and Hardy and Lawrence—men who did not inherit a

fortune as Forster did, but made their fortunes, and their names and souls, by their writing. They did not, of course, write like Ruskin, and in constructing this passage Forster chose his target well: there can indeed be something complacently poetic, something rhetorical and torrid, about Ruskin's prose. But the problem is not that Ruskin's spirit is the very spirit of English prose. It is that it is, all too often, the spirit of Forster's own prose. Here is how Forster, later in *Howards End*, apostrophizes the English countryside:

So tremendous is the City's trail! But the cliffs of Freshwater it shall never touch, and the island will guard the Island's purity till the end of time. Seen from the west, the Wight is beautiful beyond all laws of beauty. It is as if a fragment of England floated forward to greet the foreigner—chalk of our chalk, turf of our turf, epitome of what will follow. And behind the fragment lies Southampton, hostess to the nations, and Portsmouth, a latent fire.

Prose does not have to sound this way, so lulling and contentedly parochial. It is no accident that Forster's best novel, *A Passage to India*, is the one that takes him far away from England, and puts the

actual sources of England's political and economic power under closest scrutiny. It is also the book in which Forster allows himself to wonder if "personal relationships," the shibboleth of "What I Believe," are not an ultimate value, but a penultimate one. "What is the use of personal relationships when everyone brings less and less to them?" Adela Quested asks. "I feel we ought all to go back into the desert for centuries and try and get good. I want to begin at the beginning."

The metaphysical scope and urgency of this novel, the way it begins at the beginning—with the null echoes of the Marabar Caves, and the pantheist epiphanies of Professor Godbole—make it trustworthy in a way that even *Howards End* never quite is. Maybe the deepest reason Forster never wrote another novel has less to do with restrictions on what relationships he could portray than with a growing sense of the restriction inherent in all relationships. As Adela muses: "But it has made me remember that we all must die: all these personal relations we try to live by are temporary. I used to feel death selected people, it is a notion one gets from novels, because some of the characters are usually left talking at the end. Now 'death spares no one' begins to be real." ♦

Peter N. Miller THE LOGISTICAL SUBLIME

THE INFINITY OF LISTS:

AN ILLUSTRATED ESSAY

By Umberto Eco

Translated by Alastair McEwen
(Rizzoli, 408 pp., \$45)

THE CHECKLIST MANIFESTO:

HOW TO GET THINGS RIGHT

By Atul Gawande

(Metropolitan Books, 209 pp., \$24.50)

PLEASE DIRECT your attention to the front of the cabin where the flight attendants are demonstrating safety procedures . . . in the event of a water landing . . . doors to manual, and cross-check." And inside the cockpit, away from our benumbed ears, the pilot and copilot go through a series of additional checklists before pushing back from the gate, before starting the engines, before beginning the takeoff roll.

The story of where these aviation checklists came from is something that

interested Atul Gawande. As a surgeon interested in his—and his profession's—ability to heal and to do no harm, Gawande became fascinated with the steps taken by other complex professions to reduce myriad possible dangers via list-making. One of the problems faced by the surgeon is the need to deal with so many possible outcomes, all of which unfold very quickly and with serious long-lasting consequences. Some of the stories he tells of the "saves," as well as the losses, bear directly on this plotting of complexity against time.

Gawande is too smart to believe that a checklist can reduce that complexity. Instead, in telling example after telling example, he shows how lists can eliminate

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the stupid errors that are made not because things are complex, but because while focusing on the complex things we fallible humans often screw up the obvious ones: not sterilizing a medical instrument, not knowing a patient's history, leaving instruments where they do not belong—all the terribly familiar nightmares. What the list does so effectively is to routinize certain processes so as to free up what power of concentration finite humans can muster to deal with the multiplicity of possible unfolding medical realities.

Gawande, the man of action, is all about how the list can reduce the infinitude of possibility to the possibility of finitude. Umberto Eco's new book is about the way in which the finitude of a list can remind us of the possibility of infinitude. Of the two approaches, the former may save lives, and may be addressed in a concise, accessible format—it's about finitude, after all—whereas the latter can only make life richer, without ever being possibly encompassed, and certainly not between covers. Gawande's philosophy of the list already seems to have won over the World Health Organization to global surgical checklists. But a phenomenology of the list? Only Eco would try this. And yet both agree, in their different ways, that the list is a point of contact between the human and the infinite.

GAWANDE AND ECO understand that "there are more things in heaven and earth ... than are dreamt of in your philosophy." But where Gawande's response to that limit is to call a meeting—he presents this in terms of mandated communications between co-workers—Eco would send us to the museum. (This book was written to accompany an exhibition that he curated at the Louvre last winter.) There are, Eco tells us, two basic ways that artists have tried to make sense of the infinitude of the world. The first is to try and capture its essence; the second is to list as many parts of that whole as possible. Gawande's checklist almost fits the second category, but not quite.

Eco's argument is inspired by two passages from Homer's *Iliad*. In his description of the shield of Achilles, Homer creates, according to Eco, the perfect form. On this shield, Hephaestus managed to depict the earth and the heavenly bodies, and on the earth two cities full of people going about their all-too-human existence. It is complete in itself. Homer could create such a form because he knew this world. But there are many instances, Eco observes, where "we can-

not provide a definition by essence and so, to be able to talk about it, to make it comprehensible or in some way perceivable, we list its properties."

This, he explains, is what Homer did when wishing to convey the scale of the Greek expeditionary force. Lacking words, he decided instead to list; and finding the list of individuals impossibly large, he instead listed the captains of the army and their ships. This, too, proved an enormous undertaking—Homer devotes 350 verses to this catalogue—and so conveys to readers the size of the Greek force at Troy. And it is the very limitation of the list, compared to the form, which points us toward the infinite. The catalogue is meant to remind us of what cannot be grasped; the checklist, of what can be grasped.

If Homer presented Eco with the aesthetic alternatives, Kant seems to have provided him with his analytical framework. Kant argues that there are two ways of experiencing infinity. The encounter that can so overwhelm our senses and imagination as to leave us with a feeling of the infinite may nevertheless be rendered aesthetically by the description of a single star, person, or flower. But that same feeling of infinity may also be represented by something approximating the felt infinity: the starry sky by many, many, many stars. Even "a partial list of all the stars in the universe in some way wishes to make us think of this objective infinity," Eco writes. This is the analytical core of his project.

And yet, as stunning as this claim may be, one has a slightly unsettled feeling about all this. First, though ostensibly linked to an art exhibition, Eco's argument is born from texts and articulated by way of textual examples. His images illustrate but they do not conceptualize, and they certainly do not argue. At a push, Eco's entire argument could be presented without a single illustration. It did not have to be this way. One suspects, even after plowing through this book, that the "visual list" still has not met its proper theorist.

And since Eco is so invested in the infinity of some lists, he needs to separate them sharply from those others that he calls "practical," which denote specific objects, such as the shopping list, the top ten restaurants, even the museum catalogue. His chief example of this type of list—it gave the name to his show at the Louvre—is Leporello's famous catalogue of Don Giovanni's conquests, with its refrain of "*mille e tre*," or 1,003. (In fact, the number of the diabolical Don's conquests is 2,065: 1,003 refers to the smit-

ten women of Spain only.) Eco presents Leporello as a matter-of-fact empiricist—which is to say, he seems unaware that Mozart's music tells another story, hinting at mockery and a hyperbole meant to evoke a reality beyond our imaginings, just as the very precision of the enumeration of battlefield casualties induces a sickening feeling of the bottomlessness of human suffering that more general terms such as "slaughter" or "massacre" do not convey.

Eco himself explains just how it is that a practical list can also be an infinite list, noting that "a restaurant menu is a practical list. But in a book on culinary matters, a list of the diverse menus of the most renowned restaurants would already acquire a poetic value." Book lists, he offers, are equally ambivalent. They both record what is present and, in the hands of the right sort of bibliophile, are an invitation to wander in the wider Elysian fields of acquisitiveness and possession. Gawande's checklists, whether "read-do" or "do-confirm," would likely signal to Eco all the many things that could have been, or that had been. Infinity, Eco seems to suggest, is all between the ears.

AS NOW, SO TOO in the seventeenth century there was a serious side to list-making. For making a list requires paying extremely close attention to the world. Going in a direction different from Eco's, we can see the listing function as a cipher for the direct encounter with the object-world. The Baroque was not only the great age of learned play, but also of the New Science and the self-conscious championing of observation. Lists follow from this. Francis Bacon was the prophet of close examination, and was a great list-maker. Not only did he propose new ways of studying nature, he drew up inventories of natural historical projects to be undertaken by others. The vogue for encyclopedias and research tools—librarians still call them "finding aids"—that also sprouted in the seventeenth century, such as Daniel Morhof's *Polyhistor* (1688), transformed European learned culture into a series of lists: books to read, instruments to master, speeches to control, and so on. With this we come closer still to Gawande's idea of the list as a means of managing uncertainty.

The age of the New Science was also, in Europe, the age of the city. Among the transformations wrought by commerce were the flow of population into cities and the development of cities into physically and psychically huge locales, bursting to the brim with possibilities of all

sorts. When *Mr. Spectator* spent twenty-four hours on the go in London on May 23, 1711, he was announcing to his thousands of readers—his authors, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, reckoned on sixty thousand per issue—that London was the first city that did not sleep. When Dickens begins *Bleak House*, a century later, with his primeval catalogue of a London shrouded in fog and drowned in mud, we are already in the idiom to be forged by Edgar Allan Poe in “The Man of the Crowd,” which in turn was so powerfully received and made French by Baudelaire. Paris—“the capital of the nineteenth century,” as Walter Benjamin called it—was the city of infinite possibility, and infinite despair. Walt Whitman looked at New York, the future capital of the twentieth century, and saw his infinitude mirrored in its. The late modern city—Eco gives us Los Angeles—sprawls in all directions, with only connections, and neither center nor periphery. The image of the neuron is apposite, and suggests again the horizon of what we do not fully understand.

THE INFINITE came to a forty-six-year-old woman in Flatbush in the last week of December 1695. She left four little children, and so her possessions were inventoried and evaluated to provide funds for their support. Almost all we know of this woman, who was named Margrieta van Varick, is in this list. A probate inventory is a kind of death mask, and bears the same relation to the living person. It is, in short, the opposite of Gawande’s sort of list. It is a list that is the residue of all possible activities, capturing all the finitude of a person, and almost none of the infinitude. On the other hand, like a death mask, the inventory relates a physiognomy which, even if it is cast at a single moment in time, is the sum total of the many individual moments that preceded it.

Eco does not talk about inventories, but they are the form of list that scholars have relied upon for the longest time. They are fantastically helpful in providing documentation about the way people lived. Art historians have used them to learn about artists—what objects they possessed, what books they owned. Social historians have used them to assess the buying power of consumers and the pricing power of producers. Where room-by-room inventories were the norm, their survival enables us to reconstruct interior spaces, and to deduce relationships between people and their things that generally go unspoken in texts.

Seeking to understand the “social life

of goods” or to learn the “biographies of objects” has led scholars to push their questions into new places and to address them to new people. With Margrieta’s inventory one can map out her and her family’s movements across the Dutch diaspora from Amsterdam to Malacca and back, and then on to Flatbush. With it, one can help to establish the genealogy of her family. Since this particular inventory comes with an appendix that lists the debts owed her by seventy-five named residents of the six towns of late seventeenth-century western Long Island (a.k.a. Brooklyn), it also helps to identify particular people and the existence of a social network. And an inventory can serve, of course, as the basic building block for a curator trying to reassemble the kind of objects that Margrieta possessed, if not the actual ones.

But inventories can also tell us something about how people feel. For unlike a shopping list, or a top-ten list, or even a museum catalogue, a person’s inventory brings us up very close to a person’s identity. Even at an enormous distance, and without any letters, diaries, or pictures, Margrieta’s inventory, with its heavy concentration of children’s clothes and toys, and its gifts specially chosen for each child and then carefully wrapped in a napkin for posterity’s voyage, tells us something about Margrieta as a mother that bridges the vast abyss of time. An inventory, appearances to the contrary, is an affective list. Almost all inventories are twinned with death, but this partic-

ular one, with its children’s artifacts, and the circumstances surrounding its existence, wrings one’s heart, all the legalese notwithstanding.

THERE IS still one more fascinating thing about an inventory. The word is derived from the Latin verb *invenire*, “to come upon.” Inventories are lists of things that one comes upon. Probate inventories are what remain of us when our intentionality is no longer—unlike the lists that Eco treats, which are attempts to find infinity in the measure of man, such as Homer cataloging ships as a way of emphasizing an enormity beyond words; and unlike Gawande’s lists, which try to reduce that enormity to something measurable and manageable. They represent, therefore, a different kind of culture: not the triumphant spectacle of the human intervention in the natural world, but the pathos of the human on the uncertain threshold between the finite and the infinite. In this meeting of the living and the dead, the list is at its most powerful. As the poet Peter Cole wrote, in a poem called “Things on Which I’ve Stumbled”:

thought’s disjecta membra—
a letter forgotten
(a recipe scribbled on its back)
a shopping list,
or bill once due,
living’s marginalia—

the rubble of what we’ve known was
true. ♦

Isaac Chotiner THE REACTIONARY

FIELD NOTES ON DEMOCRACY: LISTENING TO GRASSHOPPERS

By Arundhati Roy

(Haymarket Books, 230 pp., \$20)

IN 2009 *The Lancet*, the prestigious British medical journal, published a study on death by fire. In the country under review, approximately one hundred thousand women perished over the course of a single year. Victims of domestic violence and participants in dowry disputes were being murdered, and the government was doing hardly anything to intervene. Before you guess the identity of this punishing country, here is a hint: it is dominated by two political parties, one of which can charitably be described as having fas-

cist tendencies, since it envisions a religiously homogenous nation and makes no secret of its contempt for people who do not fit its definition of purity. If this party regains power in the near future, the country’s next leader will likely be a man whose American visa was revoked for “violations of religious freedom.” During his tenure as a regional chief minister (the rough equivalent of a governor), his government carried out communal riots in which more than one thousand members of religious minority groups were massacred.

You might think that these are descriptions of an African despotism or one of the Balkan states, with their long history of ethnic conflict and human rights violations. But the country in question is

India, the culturally vibrant, politically democratic, film-obsessed, English-speaking homeland of Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore, and Ray. The renowned Indian writer Arundhati Roy wants us to know another India. She regards it as her calling to expose the underbelly of India, the one that exists beneath, or to the side of, its democratic traditions and its inspiring tales of hot digital start-ups and IT twentysomethings in Bangalore.

Roy, who was born in northeastern India in 1961, is best known for her novel *The God of Small Things*, which appeared in 1997. Pleasantly written and cleverly structured, the novel relied in part upon a certain knowledge of Indian history—including the history of the sometimes forgotten Indian left—as well as an intense interest in matters of class. But then Roy left novel-writing for political writing, for angry journalism. Her reportage shows her to be an ardently concerned and active citizen, a woman who refuses to overlook India's stunning poverty and its brutal caste system. As well she might not: its democratic order notwithstanding, India is riven by social injustices. But Roy's anger has had a coarsening effect upon her thinking and her writing. She has chosen to trade in the wildest forms of anti-Americanism and the crudest critiques of capitalism. Her activism has led her into a kind of mental atrophy.

Roy's early essays were written in a voice that some progressive Americans would call "prophetic," but like many prophets she tended to overstate her case. There are no small things anymore. This stridency tended to make her writing less agreeable, too. What came next was predictable: September 11, which deranged many things, had the effect of turning her into a zealot. The American government, Roy wrote two weeks after the attacks, was responsible for "military and economic terrorism, insurgency, military dictatorship, religious bigotry and unimaginable genocide (outside America)." The inclusion of that final parenthetical was, by her standards, quite generous. But Roy's subsequent work shows all the signs of further decline. Consider this passage, from the foreword to *Field Notes on Democracy*: "The starting gun [of these essays] is the year 1989, when in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, capitalism won its long jihad against Soviet Communism. (Of course, the wheel's in spin again, and it looks very much as though those same mountains are now in the process of burying capitalism.)" This mixture of silliness (does anyone believe that the remnants of the Taliban

are going to vanquish the capitalist experiment?) and tastelessness (that use of "jihad")—the appetite for righteous hyperbole—is typical of her writing now.

"Within months of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall," Roy writes, "the Indian government, once a proud leader of the Nonaligned Movement, performed a high-speed somersault and aligned itself completely to the United States, undisputed monarch of the new unipolar world." Roy wishes desperately to see an India that is not allied with the United States. She believes that the United States is responsible for chaos and murder in the Middle East—and now, thanks to globalization, in India too. But this book is not a plea for a more humane capitalism (something we urgently need). Instead, it is an attack on many of the good and democratic aspects of modern Indian life. Even worse, it is an assault on democracy itself. Roy's status as a famous woman of the far left has obscured the fact that she is an outright reactionary.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to understand Roy's feelings about India without understanding her feelings about the United States. The story of the American-Indian relationship is in many ways one of missed opportunities. Franklin Roosevelt and many New Dealers admirably favored independence for the subcontinent prior to partition. After the war and the attainment of Indian independence, however, closer ties became increasingly elusive. India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, decided to take a non-aligned stance near the beginning of the Cold War. This may have been understandable for a country recovering from imperialism and its brutal partition, and struggling with the difficulties involved in managing its own affairs (not to mention its border disputes with China). But while India did avoid some of the nastier Cold War disputes, its non-alignment sometimes shaded into apologetics for tyranny. Nehru's unwillingness to criticize the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 was the most notable example of this tendency. (The tendency sometimes persists, as in India's unwillingness to criticize harshly the neighboring Burmese junta.)

The United States, for its part, began increasingly to rely on India's arch-enemy Pakistan. The Nixon administration shamefully supported a Pakistani dictatorship that perpetrated unspeakable atrocities when East Pakistan—now Bangladesh—opted for independence. The following decade saw American

support—via Pakistan—for the Afghan mujahedin who were battling Soviet invaders. After September 11 and the American war against the jihadism that emanates from the Hindu Kush, Pakistan became even more central to American global strategy. But in this crucial hour Pakistan has been dithering and prevaricating, acting in contradictory ways, and consumed by its sordid political feuds. And so India and America have drawn closer together, united by the shared enemy of Islamic fundamentalism, and by American policymakers' increasing frustrations with Islamabad, and by democratic and capitalist affinities. The recent setbacks to a more friendly relationship—bombastic attacks on "outsourced" jobs, for example—pale in comparison to the commonalities between the two nations. For some time, Indians have constituted a large and thriving immigrant population in America, and India itself now has a comparable number of English speakers to the United States. In 2006, the Bush administration, in one of the most momentous actions in its foreign policy, signed a controversial nuclear deal with India.

Roy does more than disparage this rapprochement; she blames it for just about everything that is wrong with India. Worse, she sees it as nothing especially new. "The rules of the game changed suddenly and completely," she says of the end of the Cold War. "Millions of people who lived in remote villages and deep in the heart of untouched forests, some of whom had never heard of Berlin or the Soviet Union, could not have imagined how events that occurred in those far away places would affect their lives." Roy's implication is that India became part of the Pax Americana as soon as the Berlin Wall fell. She is wildly wrong about this. The two countries eyed each other warily throughout the 1990s.

Roy ends her litany of complaints against India's American-style capitalism of the last twenty years by remarking that "starvation and malnutrition approaching the same levels as Sub-Saharan Africa stalk the land." She graciously footnotes this passage, pointing readers to a UNICEF analysis of child poverty in Southeast Asia. This impressive report is an early sign that Roy's book is either dishonest or sloppy, because in fact the document states that India's attempts to prevent under-five mortality offer "a source of hope": "While South Asia looks on track to meet Target 1 [of the Millennium Development Goals], which aims to halve extreme income poverty by 2015, this is mostly due to India's rapid

economic growth in recent years.” This could not be clearer. The extent of poverty and disease in India is indeed horrific, but the UNICEF report regards India’s capitalist boom not as part of the problem but as part of the solution.

The simplest way to describe India’s insufficient but impressive steps to combat poverty would be to say that they represent progress. But Roy has chosen to make progress—along with democracy—her *bête noire*. “I have always been struck by the fact that the political party in Turkey that carried out the Armenian genocide was called the Committee for Union and Progress,” she remarks mindlessly. “Most of the essays in this collection are, in fact, about the contemporary connection Union and Progress, or, in today’s idiom, between Nationalism and Development—those unimpeachable twin towers of modern, free market democracy.” The “twin towers” reference is worse than unseemly. Roy expends considerable energy explaining that international capital flows are responsible for destroying the foundations of nationhood. But when it suits her purposes she is equally happy to make a contradictory point, and blame society’s ills on nationalism.

IF ROY’S DISGUST with America helps to explain her opinion of India, then her opinion of democracy helps to explain her disgust with America. From the very start of her book she shows nothing but condescension and contempt for democracy. “While we’re still arguing about whether there’s life after death,” she begins, “can we add another question to the cart? Is there life after democracy? What sort of life will it be? By democracy I don’t mean democracy as an ideal or aspiration. I mean the working model—Western liberal democracy and its variants, such as they are.” According to Roy, “the West” is no longer democratic. “The question here, really, is what have we done to democracy,” she writes. “What have we turned it into? What happens once democracy has been used up? When it has been hollowed out and emptied of meaning? What happens when each of its institutions has metastasized into something malignant and dangerous?” The strangeness of this passage—its false idea that Europe and India and the United States are less democratic than they used to be—is never really ex-

plained or expanded upon. It is quite remarkable to see the arch-progressive Roy so unexcited by great strides toward minority rights, gender equality, the acceptance of homosexuality, and a whole range of other breakthroughs in social fairness. One begins to get the suspicion that Roy simply dislikes democracy.

She certainly has no use for democratic institutions. “The politics of mass markets and vote banks is leading to majoritarianism and eventually fascism,” she ominously observes. “These essays show how the institutions of democracy—the courts, the police, the ‘free’ press, and, of course, elections—far from working as a system of checks and balances, often do the opposite.” After commenting on an unsavory Indian politician and his style of campaigning, she adds scornfully: “One person’s monster is the other one’s messiah. That’s democracy.” Well, no, that isn’t democracy. Democracy is much more, and much harder, and much more precious, than that.

Most appalling, and most revealing, is her attack on the Indian judiciary. The Indian Supreme Court has long been one of the country’s most resilient and democratic institutions. But sometimes it interprets the law on issues of land management in a manner that allows for large-scale development projects, and so Roy has only contempt for it. “The higher judiciary, the Supreme Court in particular, doesn’t just uphold the law, it micro-manages our lives,” she warns. “Its judgments range through matters great and small. It decides what’s good for the environment and what isn’t, whether dams should be built, rivers linked, mountains moved, forests felled. It decides what our cities should look like and

who has the right to live in them. It decides whether slums should be cleared, streets widened, shops sealed, whether strikes should be allowed, industries should be shut down, relocated, or privatized.... It has become the premier arbiter of public policy in this country that markets itself as the World’s Largest Democracy.” A judiciary that settles disputes, that concerns itself with environmental questions, that reviews the laws of the elected branch: imagine!

Roy returns to the subject of the Supreme Court in a later essay in her book. She claims that India is now engaged in two projects, Union and Progress. The first is an extreme nationalist form of Hinduism, and the second is capitalism. She writes: “The Progress project has its own tradition of impunity and subterfuge, no less horrific than the elaborate machinery of the Union project. At the heart of it lies the most powerful institution in India, the Supreme Court, which is rapidly becoming a pillar of Corporate Power, issuing order after order allowing for the building of dams, the interlinking of rivers, indiscriminate mining, the destruction of forests and water systems. All of this could be described as ecocide—a prelude perhaps to genocide.” Or perhaps not. There you have it: democratic accountability in the form of an independent judiciary is a mask for corporate interests that are themselves designed to destroy the planet and maybe also the human race. This is the sort of lunatic critique from which the corporations have nothing to fear.

Roy has for many years been a forceful opponent of Hindu chauvinism and extremism in India, and her piece on Gujarat, the Indian state that has been scarred

by anti-Muslim violence, is very fine. When she explains a Hindu party’s demand that Muslim citizens “earn the ‘goodwill’” of the majority, she nicely catches the threat lurking beneath the ostensibly outstretched hand. But even this narrative is marred by her tiresome overstatements and stabs at cleverness. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is indeed despicable, but it is not “no less dangerous” than the Taliban. Moreover, Roy cannot seem to write about anti-Muslim bigotry and discrimination without mentioning Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush. They seem to organize the entirety of her view of the world.

India is a country that has

Death of a Painter

In Memory of Nancy Wynne Jones

Not a tent of blue but a peek of gold
From her coign of vantage in the studio,
A Wicklow cornfield in the gable window.

Long gazing at the hill—but not Cézanne,
More Thomas Hardy working to the end
In his crocheted old heirloom of a shawl.

And now not Hardy but a butterfly,
One of the multitude he imagined airborne
Through Casterbridge, down the summer thoroughfare.

And now not a butterfly but Jonah entering
The whale’s mouth, as the Old English says,
Like a mote through a minster door.

SEAMUS HEANEY

experienced its share of terrorism from both Muslim and Hindu extremists, and so it makes a good test of Roy's analytical powers. "There is a fierce, unforgiving faultline that runs through the contemporary discourse on terrorism," Roy writes. "On one side (let's call it Side A) are those who see terrorism, especially 'Islamist' terrorism, as a hateful, insane scourge that spins on its own axis, in its own orbit, and has nothing to do with the world around it, nothing to do with history, geography, or economics. Therefore, Side A says, to try to place it in a political context, or even to try to understand it, amounts to justifying it, and is a crime in itself. Side B believes that, though nothing can ever excuse or justify it, terrorism exists in a particular time, place, and political context, and to refuse to see that will only aggravate the problem and put more people in harm's way. Which is a crime in itself." She then adds: "Through the endless hours of analysis and the endless op-ed essays, in India at least, there has been very little mention of the elephants in the room: Kashmir, Gujarat, and the demolition of the Babri Masjid [a mosque destroyed in Ayodhya in 1992 by Hindu fanatics]." And finally: "What we're experiencing now is blowback, the cumulative result of decades of quick fixes and dirty deeds."

Roy makes it quite clear, in other words, that she belongs to Side B. But who, precisely, fails to see that terrorism exists in a particular time, place, and political context? Not the intelligent members of Side A, or the people who plan and execute the anti-terrorist wars that Roy deplors. And another problem immediately presents itself. Roy has just listed a number of "root causes" for the murders in Mumbai. What about the demolition of the Babri Masjid? What of the crimes committed by Hindu extremists? What are the root causes of this form of extremism? Roy does not really canvas any possible explanations, and seems dead to the possibility that religious terrorism is about more than historical grievances. But she is blind to this point. And because India's Hindus are not a besieged minority, Roy is both more critical of them and unwilling to provide context or explanations for their behavior. Her sympathies only extend to "out" groups, which are of course the progressive's "in" groups.

Oblivious to the hole she has dug for herself, Roy keeps digging. "But where would Side A accommodate the saying of Babu Bajrangi of Ahmedabad, India, who sees himself as a democrat, not a terrorist?" she asks, all of a sudden ac-

cepting the self-description "democrat" at face value. "He was one of the major linchpins of the 2002 Gujarat genocide and has said (on camera): 'We didn't spare a single Muslim shop, we set everything on fire, we set them on fire and killed them.'" It is important to answer Roy's question. What would Side A make of Babu Bajrangi? My guess is that Rumsfeld and Bush would call him a murderer. Remember, it was the Bush State Department that revoked the visa of Gujarati chief minister Narendra Modi after the riots. No matter: the real question is how Roy explains Bajrangi, and unfortunately there is no answer.

SINCE THE TWO THINGS that Roy hates most are democratic capitalism and Hindu fundamentalism, it makes sense that she would try and connect the two. Unfortunately, she has no evidence of any kind for such a connection, and so we are given passages such as this one: "It's interesting that just around the time Manmohan Singh, then the finance minister, was preparing India's markets for neo-liberalism, L. K. Advani [a BJP leader] was making his first Rath Yatra, fueling communal passion and preparing us for neo-fascism. In December 1992, rampaging mobs destroyed the Babri Masjid. In 1993, the Congress government of Maharashtra signed a power purchase agreement with Enron." This is equivalent to saying that in 1995 Michael Jordan returned to the NBA and in 1996 Bill Clinton was re-elected president. Roy adds, pathetically, that "the inexorable ruthlessness of one process feeds directly into the insanity of the other." One is tempted to remind Roy that correlation does not prove causation, but since she has not even bothered to prove correlation, the point would be futile. When Roy writes about Muslim Kashmiri extremists, she tries to summon our sympathy and our understanding, and explain how people could be driven to commit despicable crimes. When she writes about Hindu terrorism, she merely takes quick swipes at American capitalism.

Roy's aversion to complex thinking shows up again in her discussions of Kashmir. This Indian state, whose full name is Jammu and Kashmir, was the only Muslim-majority state that opted to be a part of India after partition. It has been the focus of wars between India and Pakistan, and is now under de facto martial law, administered from New Delhi. Roy rightfully bemoans a policy that has become a blight on the Indian state, but she does not broach any of the difficult questions left in parti-

tion's bloody wake. After indicting India for its crimes in Kashmir, Roy writes that "India needs Azadi [the Urdu word for 'freedom'] from Kashmir just as much—if not more—than Kashmir needs Azadi from India." Roy is correctly arguing that anti-democratic actions harm the fabric of a society, but her statement also reveals an unwillingness to wrestle with a crucial question. As the world's largest multi-ethnic democracy, what would it mean for India to lose its only Muslim-majority state? Would another partition lead to a backlash against India's remaining Muslims? Roy gives no sign of even having considered these questions.

One further comment must be made about Roy's discussion of Kashmir. It is that her attack on other Indian journalists for ignoring the issue is shameful. In her introductory essay, she declares that, "None of India's analysts, journalists, and psephologists cared to ask [tough questions about the Kashmiri elections].... None of the high-profile scholars of the great festival of democracy ... talked about what elections mean in the presence of such a massive, year-round troop deployment.... No one talked about why people who lived under a military occupation ... might need somebody to listen to them, to take up their cases, to represent them." But Roy's central essay on Kashmir in this collection was itself published in a first-rate Indian magazine; and many fine Indian journalists have written honestly and toughly about the issue. (Roy footnotes the above paragraph with an essay about Kashmir that appeared in the excellent Indian journal *Economic and Political Weekly*.) Roy perfectly exemplifies the self-righteousness of radicals: she needs to see herself as a dissident in the wilderness, a lonely hero.

If Roy believes that her activism is more important than her fiction, there is a certain honor in her decision to abandon the novel form. But these essays show a woman whose reading and experience and engagement with the world have served to narrow her thinking rather than enlarge it. Instead of allowing her reporting to shape her story, she has allowed her preconceived notions to shape every last drop of her analysis. At the beginning of this book, after asking some rhetorical questions about democracy (or "democracy"), Roy adds: "It would be a conceit to pretend that the essays in this book provide answers to any of these questions." When I first read this passage, I wondered whether Roy was setting the bar too low. In fact, she does not even approach her own paltry standard. ♦

The New Map

THERE ARE FIGURES in history who wish to leave behind what Malraux called “a scar on the map,” but it was Barack Obama’s desire to leave behind a new map, and one without scars. His promise of global transformation was outrageously genuine, underwritten by an invincible belief in his own unprecedentedness and in his own magic; and it now looks like a personal delusion enlarged by political excitement into a popular delusion. He really did think that the world would change when he summoned it to change, as if its dangerous and miserable state was the result merely of misunderstandings and the failure of an adequately illuminated leader to manifest himself. *Olam keminhago noheg*, the Talmud says: the world acts according to its custom. Such a view is not “conservatism” or “realism,” but something more fundamental—the condition of all responsible thinking about change, which is, after all, also a regular feature of the world; and of course a warning about counterfeit salvations. There are realms in which the character of the inherited world is even a warrant for hope. But not for Obama. “He’s been bored to death his whole life,” Valerie Jarrett told David Remnick, in one of the most unwittingly damning remarks anybody ever heard. The poor man: he should come in, the water’s fine—and it’s our water, the water we have. Jarrett added that “he’s just too talented to do what ordinary people do.” So the overman, whose admirers like to disdain his predecessor for hubris, set out to start everything over. In some ways, this marked a welcome introduction of the critical spirit; in other ways, it was an expression of a kind of lack of ontological respect, of ahistorical thinking disguised as a new idea of history, of the blindness caused by a certainty of vision. We exchanged an experiment in national greatness conservatism for an experiment in personal greatness liberalism. And in the spring of 2010, Obama got his global reformation, his new map.

A MOMENTOUS re-alignment is occurring abroad, and it is not the one that Obama envisaged. He came into office believing that the two most significant strategic challenges for U.S. foreign policy were China and “the Muslim world”; everything else, including human rights, seemed like survivals of an earlier era, and therefore tedious. But now there has emerged an unforeseen strategic challenge in the form of a new non-aligned movement, an informal and increasingly substantial association among Putin, Ahmadinejad, Erdogan, Lula, and Chávez. The states they lead are not weak. There are days when Karzai, too, looks like a member of this company; and such tendencies are to be found also in the Pakistani leadership. All this is the strategic equivalent of a vast oil spill. The new non-alignment is of course highly aligned. The old one, of the 1950s and 1960s, could pretend to a neutral course between the United States and the Soviet Union; but in the absence of the Soviet Union, non-alignment means only one thing, and it is alignment against the United States. These new allies are not the middle, they are the other side. The ideological objective of the new non-alignment is to keep alive the specter of the American hegemon. Its practical purpose is the thwarting of American intentions around the world. The immediate focus of the obstructionism is the American campaign to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons: to run interference for Ahmadinejad and the illegitimate regime in Tehran. But the implications of their collaboration go beyond the Iran question. The new orientation of Turkey, a member of NATO, situated at one of the world’s seams, represents a dreadful setback for the United States. (The eruption in the political culture of Turkey can hardly be imputed to the *Mavi Marmara*.) What we are witnessing is the anti-Americanism of the Obama era, which is the anti-Americanism that could never come to pass. The Obama turn in American foreign policy is looking more and more like what Bellow used to call the Good Intentions Paving Company.

CAN HOSTILITY to American power be strongly addressed by a president who is skeptical of American power? This is not an irony, it is a problem. It is true that Obama is a war president, but he is an anti-war war president, which is either the best kind or the worst kind; and it is now clear that Obama’s loud insistence upon his timetable for de-escalation and withdrawal in Afghanistan has shaken the Afghans and prompted the ignoble Karzai to contemplate an entente with the Taliban and maybe even with Pakistan. It is in his policy toward Iran that Obama’s discomfort with American power, his haunting by the goblins of the American left, is most apparent. He, too, is worried about the American hegemon. Among the hundreds of complacent pages in Jonathan Alter’s account of Obama’s first year in office, there is a complacent page about the rebellion in Iran a year ago and the president’s frigid response to it. “He argued plausibly,” Alter writes, “that given the history of U.S. meddling in Iran, loud support for the protesters would just give Ahmadinejad and the mullahs a propaganda tool.” And “it made sense,” Alter emptily adds. Indeed, “the demonstrators seemed to agree and expressed no concern about the American president’s tardiness in speaking out.” That is false, though I expect the White House believes it. An Iranian friend recently told me about a letter he received from Tehran complaining that the most damaging American intervention in Iran since the overthrow of Mossadegh was Obama’s non-intervention against Ahmadinejad’s brutal repression. Last week the National Endowment for Democracy, may its tribe increase, gave an award to the Green Movement on the anniversary of its uprising. Obama sent a message to the ceremony in which he did not mention the Green Movement. Instead he “look[ed] forward to the day when Iranians will be able to speak freely,” rather as one looks forward to the day when the sun will come out. He even trotted out his old crap about “bend[ing] the arc of history in the direction of justice,” which was an insult both to the dissidents and to Martin Luther King Jr., whose grand image Obama has reduced to the rhetoric of abstention. Morally and strategically, for the purpose of nuclear peace and for the purpose of freedom, there is no more urgent task for the president of the United States than to place this country on the side of the Iranian resistance. It is very twentieth century, I know; but there is nothing boring about it.

LEON WIESELTIER

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Israel: An Apartheid State?

Is there any truth at all in this oft-repeated calumny?

Only a short time ago, many universities, goaded by left-wing professors and students and their substantial Muslim student bodies, "celebrated" Israel Apartheid Week in which divestiture from, boycott of and sanctions against Israel were demanded. Is there any truth, any justification at all in this odious characterization?

What are the facts?

South African Apartheid. "Apartheid," the Dutch-Afrikaans term for separation, was the social order of the former South Africa. It meant exactly that. The Black majority of the nation and the so-called Colored were kept strictly apart in all aspects of life. White domination over the native population was mandatory. For instance: Non-Whites had to carry a "passbook." Passbook infringement could lead to deportation to one of the Bantu "homelands." Blacks and Coloreds were being kept from a wide array of jobs. Black-White sex was a serious jail-time criminal offense. Hospitals and ambulances were strictly separated. Whites enjoyed free education until graduation. Not so for Blacks, whose education was strictly limited by the oppressive "Bantu Education Act."

By law, no mixed sports were allowed. Park benches, swimming pools, libraries, and movies were strictly separated. Blacks were not allowed to purchase or imbibe alcoholic drinks – etc, etc, etc. And that is only a partial and small list of the many abusive impediments that non-Whites suffered under the South African apartheid regime.

Israeli Equality. To tar Israel with that kind of brush is utterly malicious. The exact opposite is the case. Not one single apartheid practice applies to Israel. Israel is by far the most racially mixed and tolerant nation in the entire Muslim Middle East. Arabs, who are about 20% of Israel's population, enjoy, without any exception, the same rights and opportunities in all fields as their Jewish fellow citizens. The total equality of all Israelis is assured in Israel's founding document. All non-Jews (which means primarily Muslim Arabs) have full voting rights. At present, eleven Arabs sit in Israel's Knesset (parliament): Three Arabs are deputy speakers. Arabs are represented in Israel's diplomatic service all over the world. Arab students may and do study in all Israeli universities. All children in Israel are entitled to subsidized education until graduation, without any restrictions based on color or religions. In short, Muslim Arabs and other non-Jews are allowed everything that Jews are allowed, everything that non-

Whites were not allowed in apartheid South Africa.

But, yes, there is one difference: Jewish Israeli men are obligated to a three-year stint in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and serve in the reserve until they are 50 years old. For Arabs, this service is voluntary. Except for the Druze, hardly any Arabs volunteer to serve in the armed forces.

Israel has granted permanent residence and full citizen rights to a large number of legal and illegal foreign workers and their families – from the Philippines, Eritrea, Colombia, Nigeria, and from many other countries. Nobody, of course, is forced or requested to convert to Judaism as a condition of their being

allowed to stay. Israel has accepted a shipload of Vietnamese refugees who had sought asylum. No Arab country has accepted a single one of those refugees. Israel has brought in about 70,000 black Ethiopian Jews, who despite their backwardness have become fully

integrated citizens of Israel. Everything that Blacks were not allowed to do in South Africa is totally open to non-Jews in Israel.

The "Apartheid Wall." Another reason for which left-wing zealots and anti-Semites like to refer to Israel as the "apartheid state" is the fence between Israel proper and the territories. This fence (which is indeed a fence and not a wall over most of its length) was constructed at great cost in order to prevent the suicidal attacks that had killed hundreds of Israelis and grievously wounded thousands more. Thankfully, this "wall" is exceptionally successful and has totally prevented any such attacks since its completion. There is little question that this separation fence is the cause of inconvenience for some of the Arab population. But it is an annoyance that they have brought about themselves. And, of course, there are walls for protection all over the world. The Chinese invented it hundreds of years ago. Our own country has a long, high, very sophisticated wall across our border with Mexico. It is a wall, not to keep out criminals who want to kill Americans, but people who want to come here only in search of a better life. To call the Israeli fence an "apartheid wall" is an expression of ignorance and of malevolence.

Israel is a light unto the nations. It has, regrettably, many enemies – all or most of the world's Muslim nations and left-wing ideologues who mostly hate the United States and who consider Israel to be America's cat's-paw in the Middle East. The reality, of course, is that Israel is the exact opposite of an apartheid state. It is a country in which all residents, all citizens, enjoy the same full rights. All other countries in the Middle East are benighted theocracies, ruthless tyrannies, or mostly both. To call Israel an apartheid state is an expression of ignorance, anti-Semitism, and malice.

This message has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
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